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AUTHOR	Hall, Peter M.; Spencer-Hall, Dee Ann
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ABSTRACT

This report describes a study of two small-to-middle-sized midwestern school districts, each observed for about one year. The aim was to clarify the nature of the organizational form of school systems and to examine the organizational processes, using qualitative rather than quantitative methods. Two central concerns of the study were to explore the methods for handling problems in the two districts and to determine to what extent the negotiated order model was useful in describing the districts' organizational functioning. The problems in both districts were similar, varying in source, emergence, magnitude, duration, and intensity, as well as in the degree and type of negotiations involved in their resolution. One district was found to be more like a negotiated order than the other. Similarities and differences between the districts are detailed in the report. Limitations to the application of the negotiated order model to school systems are discussed. (Author/PGD)

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CENTER FOR RESEARCH IN SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI - COLUMBIA

Conditions and Processes of Problem Identification, Definition,

and Resolution in Two School Systems:

Toward a Grounded Theory*

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Peter M. Hall
Department of Sociology
University of Missouri--Columbia

Dee Ann Spencer-Hall
Department of Sociology
Central Missouri State University

Final Report of National Institute of Education
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Peter M. Hall
Department of Sociology
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Abstract

This report discusses a two year study of two school districts. Each district was observed for about one year. The aim was to determine the nature of organizational form of school systems and to examine organizational processes. Two major foci of the study were an examination of the career of problems in the districts and the determination of whether the negotiated order model was congruent with school systems. A typology of problems and a means of analysis is developed within this report. Problems, generally, are similar in both districts. They vary in their source, emergence, magnitude, duration, resolution, intensity, and negotiation. They occur independently or as simultaneous overlapping events. One district was found to be more like a negotiated order than the other. Comparisons between the districts are detailed in the report. Differences are due to community context, organizational history, administrator succession, organizational complexity, participant efficacy, and teacher militancy. More reasons, however, are given for the limitation of that paradigm in its application to school systems.

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Introduction

It would be difficult to put down the daily newspaper or one's favorite weekly news magazine without seeing a story mentioning some new criticism, problem, controversy or failing of public education. That sacrosanct, nonpartisan, expansive, successful institution of the 1950's has given way to reforms, changes, and innovations in the 1960's and more recently to rejection, doubt, and curtailment in the 1970's. The foundation of democracy and the medium for social mobility has been found wanting. Observations of and questions about continued segregation, the failures of desegregation, graduates who cannot read or write, declining test scores, increasing disciplinary problems including violence and vandalism, teacher effectiveness and teacher stress, growing teacher militancy and strikes, and eroding public support are ubiquitous. Parallel to these developments has been the increasing awareness in local school districts of greater external constraints through the ever increasing activity and involvement of state and federal agencies and agents.

One way to make sense of the problems and the developments is to observe that what happens between pupils and a teacher in the classroom or to pupils as they move from the first exciting and anxious day of kindergarten to the drone of the commencement speaker and the tones of the recessional is a complex function involving community, school, school system and an amorphous intermingling of external influences. To understand what goes on in the classroom or the principal's office must be related to occurrences at a faculty meeting, a Board study session, a superintendent's press conference in conjunction with the social geography of the community and the exchanges with entities inside and outside the community. The school system is a complex organization within a network of organizations, and to understand how any of its units work requires an understanding of organizational processes and the establishment of the external and internal context of action.

For some the aforementioned will be hardly surprising. Everyone knows that school districts are organizations. School boards pass policy, administrations implement those policies, principals supervise their teachers' instructional activity and discipline exceptionally unruly children, and teachers instruct children according to rules, guidelines, and the principles of educational practice. Just as teachers are often taught that the success to classroom management is through organized detailed lesson plans, educational administrators seem to be taught that the key to success is through knowledge of school law, finance, and codified bureaucratic rules and policy manuals. Breakdowns or failures then in the classroom or in the organization is likely to be attributed to the inadequacy of the individual and can be remedied by her/his replacement as opposed to being a function of organizational structure and process.

Yet others know that organizations in general and even school districts do not work that way. They know that the classroom seems remarkably resistant to change, that administrators tend to control school boards, that principals do not know what teachers do, that much of classroom time is not spent in instruction, and that external

agencies increasingly limit the options of school districts. Is this indeed an organization? If so, what kind of organization is a school or a school system? Is there some way to fit the contradictory images together in a coherent manner?

The study of complex organizations has a well-developed tradition and literature. That tradition has focused upon religious, economic, political, military, governmental, medical, and social entities rather than educational ones. Thus we do not have much to build upon in terms of answering whether and how schools and school systems fit together. Another problem in the field of organizational studies has been that the dominant methodological approach has stressed large samples of organizations or their members whose characteristics or responses can be treated in complicated quantitative ways. Confidence in the validity of those measures and the results, theoretical and practical, of those studies have been increasingly questioned. Indeed, scholars who had been trained to use those sophisticated mathematical techniques have recently turned toward approaches that observe, describe, and analyze actual behavior of organizational members.

There has been a long tradition of qualitative studies of organizations although it has not been as well-known or as influential as the quantitative approach. However, those studies tended to be localized and unitized--one agency, one factory, one union local or one hospital. Field studies in education tended to be of a classroom, a school building or an administrator. There have been few qualitative studies of dispersed units tied together as an organization, like a school district. Our concern was that the study of one more elementary school or superintendent would add little to the existing knowledge. Gains could be made, we hoped, by locating school and superintendent in the larger system and studying all units so that the flow of influences and consequences could be observed and analyzed. Recently, some approaches and studies have been designed and conducted that do attempt to analyze multi-branch organizations, multi-tiered industries, and interorganizational networks. In addition, useful theoretical and conceptual frameworks for understanding those kinds of organizations, industries, and networks have been recently proposed. One of those conceptual frameworks is used in this study to explore the nature of organization of local school systems.

For about two years, the authors studied school districts in two small-to-middle-sized communities, each for about one year at a time. Within the district, the focus was upon the school board, the central administration, and the various school buildings and their interrelationships. In addition, the relationships between the local community and the schools and between external entities and the schools were followed when it was necessary and fruitful. The primary methodological orientation was observation and informal interviewing and secondarily formal interviews and content analysis of local media and organizational communications. The data-gathering was informed by a symbolic interactionist theoretical perspective with a specific focus upon the career of organizational problems and the application of the metaphor of the negotiated order to the

organization of the school system. This report contains a brief section on the approach to the study, a statement on the conduct of the study and the methods of data-gathering, a description of the communities and school systems, an analysis of problems encountered by school system participants, an exploration of whether school systems can be viewed as negotiated orders, and some conclusions about the research, its limitations, and continuing and future analysis.

Approaches to the Study

J. Kenneth Benson (1977) in an introduction to a special issue of The Sociological Quarterly on organizational analysis: critique and innovation asserts that the field has been, and to a large extent still is, dominated by a three-element paradigm--a rational goal-oriented structure, positivist methodology, and administrative-technical concern. Flowing from Weber's original definitions, organizations are believed to be based upon goals and then to rationally develop strategies, mechanisms and patterns to realize those goals. Methodologically, organizations have generally been studied by use of questionnaires or interviews which assume participants and analysts share consensus as to terms of their conversations or the use of independently derived aggregate data fitted to concepts (size, technology, span of control) presumed to explain behavior. Practical concern with effectiveness, efficiency, leadership, decision-making in organizational studies has led to a limitation of the range and focus of areas studied and biases in the direction of administrative concerns for locating technical adjustments to assist their operations.

This paradigm, according to Benson, has been called into serious question by perspectives and studies which emphasize four analytical problems--action, process, power, and levels. The action analytic challenges the objective reality of organizational features such as goals, rules, hierarchy, differentiation, and technology as reifications which are, in fact, dependent upon the people in whose actions such features are expressed. Thus features must be grounded in the actual perceptions and behaviors of real people and our attention is directed to the ongoing day-to-day interactions through which a reality is produced, sustained, and even changed. Whether actors treat organizational features as objective reality is an empirical question. The process analytic challenges the basic assumption of stability in organizational features. Process-oriented analysis deals with the possibility of changes in the underpinnings of the organization and with ongoing interactions that continuously alter or reproduce the organization. Alteration, found to be more common than expected, can range from small-scale adjustments to major historical breaks. The power analytic has two major implications here. One is that major influences upon action and process is the distribution of power. Thus how a hierarchy approximates reality, a role is defined, or particular or general change is affected or resisted depends upon who has power. A more basic implication is that needs, goals, essential outputs, technologies, division of labor are the expression of the power of certain interests inside and outside the organization. Power is not simply one among many factors of organizational life, according to this analytic, but rather the essential core. The levels analytic questions the usual definition of the organization as the unit of analysis. This has been challenged in two ways. The first internally in terms of viewing organizations not as units but treating that as a reification and emphasizing the actions of groups, individuals, sub-units, and coalitions marking organizational life. Externally, while being aware that organizational studies have examined the relationship between the environment and the organization, this relationship is reconstituted in terms of interorganizational networks. Organizational features are a result of tendencies in

the network. An extension of the network idea is to locate organizations within networks within larger networks within larger networks which have limits and boundaries requiring explication and effects.

We are aware, as is Benson, that others are working to alter the established mode of analysis. March and Olson (1976), Weick (1976), Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), Meyer and Associates (1978), and Brown (1978) are all good examples of such counter-formulations. Corwin (1977) clearly points out how many aspects of the criticism of the Weberian model have been around for some time. In any case, an adequate approach to organizational analysis, according to Benson must deal with 1) the social production of organizational reality, 2) the political bases of organizational realities, 3) the connection of organizations to the larger set of structural arrangements in the society, and 4) the continuously emergent character of organizational patterns.

Symbolic interaction is a perspective which satisfies the action and process analytiques (or points 1 and 4). It emphasizes emergence, process, voluntarism, and meaning. Its focus is upon how actors create and construct social order. Social structure is not automatic or to be reified but rather occurs out of the repeated, reaffirmed, reconstituted acts of participants. (Blumer, 1969; Hall, 1972; Hewitt, 1976). Therefore the perspective requires that the perspective of the participants be taken into account and their actual interactions in the creation of organizational reality be observed. The organizational manifestation of this perspective is expressed in the work of Strauss et al. (1963, 1964) and Maines (1977) and called "the negotiated order."

The interactionist perspective is, however, weak in terms of dealing with power and levels. Peter Hall introduced a conceptualization of power using interactionist terms (1972). Other interactionists have also focused upon power (Scheff, 1968, and Luckenbill, 1979). Hall's view, while recognizing inducements and constraints, coercion, and authority focuses upon information flow control and the utilization of symbols, jointly called political impression management. Any study of organization will have to take into account all forms of control while recognizing the necessity to focus upon actual enactment.

The greatest problem, however, lies in contextualizing the organization in a systematic manner. Interactionists have tended to focus upon what participants actually take into account in a situation and not how situations and contexts are linked in a vertical or horizontal fashion. Thus they have not paid sufficient attention to how what participants taken into account is influenced, determined, or even manipulated structurally and from a distance. Some recent attempts to move in this direction by interactionists are represented in the work of Farberman (1975), Denzin (1977), Gerson (1976), and Maines (1977). For both paradigmatic and methodological reasons, this problem is and will remain the most difficult to study and analyze, particularly if one utilizes field methods with a limited number of researchers.

The negotiated order model of organizations was developed by Anselm Strauss and his colleagues, Leonard Schatzman, Rue Bucher, Danuta Ehrlich, and Melvin Sabshin (1963, 1964) in the course of studying two psychiatric hospitals, a large state mental hospital, and a psychiatric wing in a smaller highly respected private general hospital. A summary of the main points of that work was recently provided by Strauss (1978:5-6).

> 1. We stated that social order was negotiated order: In the organizations studied, apparently there could be no organizational relationships without accompanying negotiations.
>
> 2. Specific negotiations seemed contingent on specific structural conditions: who negotiated with whom, when, and about what. So the negotiations were patterned, not accidental. They could be studied in terms of their conditions, character, and consequences for persons and organizations.
>
> 3. The products of negotiation (contracts, understandings, agreements, "rules," and so forth) all had temporal limits, for eventually they would be reviewed, reevaluated, revised, revoked, renewed.
>
> 4. The negotiated order had to be worked at, and the bases of concerted action needed to be continually reconstituted. Not only were negotiations continually terminated, but new ones were also made daily.
>
> 5. The negotiated order on any given day could be conceived of as the sum total of the organization's rules and policies, along with whatever agreements, understandings, pacts, contracts, and other working arrangements currently obtained. These include agreements at every level of the organization, of every clique and coalition and include covert as well as overt agreements.
>
> 6. Any changes impinging on the negotiated order--whether something ordinary, such as a new staff member, a disrupting event, or a betrayed contract, or whether more unusual, such as the introduction of a new technological element or a new ideology--called for renegotiation or reappraisal. This meant consequent changes in the negotiated order.
>
> 7. We went on to suggest that the reconstitution of social or organizational order (which was our central concern) might be fruitfully conceived of in terms of a complex relationship between the daily negotiation process and a periodic appraisal process. The form not only allowed the daily work to get done but also reacted on the more formalized and permanent organizational rules, policies, and established conventions and understandings. In turn, the latter served to set the limits and some directions of negotiation.
>
> 8. We suggested, finally, that future studies of the complex relationships that exist between the more stable elements of organizational order and the more fleeting working arrangements might profit by examining the former as if they were sometimes a background, against which the latter were being evolved in the foreground, and sometimes as if the reverse obtained. What was needed was both a concentrated focus on and the development of a terminology adequate to handle this kind of background-foreground metaphor. But, whether that metaphor or another, the

central question was "How do negotiation and appraisal play into each other and into the rules, policies and other 'more stable' elements of social order?"

The metaphor of the negotiated order then suggests that at any given time, the following social objects may be subject to negotiation because of ambiguity or conflict-values, goals, rules, role expectations and relationships, authority hierarchies, resource distributions, collective vs. group vs. individual interests, responses to new situations, decisions and courses of action.

It was our supposition that the model might have application to school systems.

Almost everyone who examines the organizational aspect of education comments on the multiplicity and ambiguity of its objectives, goals, and associated values. They also note that there is an uncertainty about results of the educational process and the application of criteria to evaluate the relation between goals and products. These conditions would be conducive to negotiation as participants stress particular or new goals in conjunction with forms and processes to attempt to reach them. The ambiguity and uncertainty would seemingly lead to numerous problematic situations requiring definition, interpretation, and bargaining to achieve collective definitions and practical solutions.

Educational organizations are interesting mixtures of political, bureaucratic, and professional involvements. Teachers regard themselves as professionals and thus try to maintain autonomy over their work situation. Indeed, the diffuseness of authority characteristic of school systems derives in part from professionalism and autonomy. On the other hand, schools have porous boundaries because the ultimate formal and legal control of the schools derives from the community which provides the pupils, the funds via taxes and bonds, the leaders and policy-makers by election. Thus in a sense, at two ends the autonomy is potentially challenged by "the people." To compound the relationship is the fact that the coordination of schools has become complex. A partial answer has been to increase the levels of bureaucratic administrators and numbers of rules and regulations. Drives for autonomy and "the people's will" can become reflected in and refracted by administrative decisions and rules. Also all of the administrative units, people's representatives, and teaching professionals can develop interests of their own in conflict to varying degrees with that of other units or the total collectivity. Conflict is always possible and frequently present. Negotiation and bargaining are potential means to bring about accommodation and resolution.

Decisions in school organizations may occur under constraints of time, resources, anticipation, external and internal pressures. Current circumstances show increasingly limited resources and increasing external pressure from state and federal governments, not to mention that of community groups and unionizing teachers. In addition, problems cannot always be anticipated and time pressures of deadlines prevent complete planning, discussion, and calculations. Limited resources requires saying "no" to some, probable differential distribution, program postponements or cutbacks. We also assume that new

situations and contingencies are regularly occurring events for which there are no pat answers, obvious rules to be applied, and role behaviors specified. The response to all of these constraints could be some form of negotiation.

Finally, as in the hospital, the personnel are continually changing due to resignation, promotion, and hiring. While not approximating the hospital in terms of different kinds of professionals and ideological variation, partially different perspectives seem likely as a result of institutional commitment, career stage, length of employment, social background, reference groups, and communication network. The turnover and different perspectives mean that "institutional memory" is incomplete and nonconsensual. Situations cannot necessarily be confronted in the same way and negotiation can result.

The strength of the negotiated order is that 1) it pulls together under one umbrella in interrelated fashion what others deal with partially; 2) it focuses attention and demands vision of actual behavior-in-place; 3) it required taking into account the perspectives of the participants; 4) it anticipates emergence, contingency, and temporality; and 5) it de-reifies cultural and structural elements and examines how they are used in real life situations by interested actors. It allows a transcendence of mechanical relationships between structure and behavior and is responsive then to the action and process analytics.

Day and Day (1977) present an important critique of the limitations of the work of Strauss et al. First, they note that the conceptualization of negotiation and bargaining suggests a cooperative and usually smooth process involving temporary disruptions but with little evidence of what we might call coercive power or extended conflict. Power, to the extent that it is recognized, is situational and contingent and refers to the ability of different participants to control the course of events and actions of others. Power should be, according to the Days, embedded in structural attributes and not simply be seen as representing one's interpersonal maneuvers. Secondly, they strongly object to the abstraction of the negotiations, situations, and the organization from a larger sociohistorical context. By failing to take into account how the larger external structure affects the organization or how higher levels may constrain the options of lower levels, the Days say our attention may be directed to the fluff, to verbal representations of inconsequential matters. What the participants may negotiate about may have limited impact on the organization as a whole or even on the participants. At the same time, the negotiated order theorists may exaggerate the degree of organizational change. The perspective, they argue, needs to be more politically, structurally, and historically grounded and its subjective aspects need to be tempered by attention to objective material events.

What is required to deal with the problem of levels is a contextualization which locates a negotiation, a situation, a unit, or an organization in a systemic manner. Harvey Farberman's (1975) work on the automobile industry by developing a view of the totality makes sense of interpersonal negotiations and individual perceptions. Farberman can see why individual behaviors occur, why people develop certain rationales for that behavior and miss the larger structural impact upon their situation. Elihu Gerson (1976) recognizes that organizations, groups, and individuals are involved in many situations. The actors' ability to function in those situations is a function of their sovereignty, which is defined as the net balance of resources and constraints available . . . across the full range of settings in which the actor(s) participates. Resources that are committed in one situation may not be available in another, limiting sovereignty across situations. Organizational life, to Gerson, is viewed in terms of the flow and degree of sovereignty inter- and intra-situationally. Maines (1977) says that intra- and inter-organizational relationships should be seen in terms of nested negotiative situations which affect each other. Our general assumption is that higher order settings limit relatively lower order settings, i.e. the options and resources are less for lower order participants and the constraints are greater. Successful control, however, depends upon monitoring, coordination, and compliance which are not necessarily automatic. The consequence of this formulation would be to explore, for example, how actions emanating from Washington and the state capital limit the school board (as well as induce certain actions by program funding) or how decisions by the school board or the administrative staff limit the principal and teachers of a school in solving a problem or, in fact, in causing a problem. Lower level participants can also create problems for those above them and negotiate across levels but the general direction of control is downward.

It seems obvious to state that reason for the previous statement lies in the distribution and enactment of power. Whether or not there is negotiation is a function of power. Who gets to take part, the content of the negotiation, its process and outcome are also resultants of power.

Power we define using Buckley (1967:186) as

> control or influence over the actions of others to promote one's goals without their consent, against their will or without their knowledge or understanding (for example by control of the physical, psychological or sociocultural environment within which others must act). The mechanisms involved may range from naked force, through manipulation of symbols, information, and other environmental conditions, to the dispensing of conditional rewards. The emphasis here is on the lack of ascertainable (consent), considered as something socially and psychologically deeper than mere acquiescence or overt compliance.

Gamson (1968) has cogently pointed out that amount of resources does not equal amount of power because participants will not commit, be able to commit, or commit effectively all of their resources for anyone of a series of encounters. The outcome is interactive and dependent, at least, on the range of importance attached to the situation and on the ability to predict the behavior of others. The outcome

depends upon awareness, information, evaluation, and commitment. Linkage can be made here to what can be called resource management, namely the ways in which actors create, consume, assemble, allocate, reallocate, transfer, mobilize or even lose resources. Attention then needs to be directed to the forms of utilization of resources or what Buckley called mechanisms of power. We have divided them into coercion, conditional rewards or inducements and political impression management subdivided into information-control and symbolic mobilization (Hall, 1972). Coercion refers to adding disadvantages to situations and usually occurs when groups are relatively powerless, alienated, and/or severely threatened. Conditional rewards are adding advantages to situations and occur among relatively neutral participants who possess some degree of material resources.

Impression management means controlling the conduct of others by controlling the definition of the situation. By having others accept the actor's definition of reality they will voluntarily act as s/he wishes them to act. The concept of impression management comes from the work of Erving Goffman (1959) and refers to two interrelated stages and processes. On the front stage (out in the open, in public), performers use symbols, verbal and nonverbal to strengthen or maintain the position of the actor(s) by creating character, defining issues, managing discontent, and mobilizing action. In the backstage discrediting information is concealed; structuring and planning of performances takes place; intelligence is gathered and evaluated. An extensive elaboration of the two forms is found in Hall (1972).

Parallel to the use of the negotiated order metaphor, we also sought to focus upon the career of problems in the different levels of the school system. The details of this approach are more clearly specified in a later section. In general, however, the perspective assumes that problems are not simply objective, structural conditions but rather the creations of active, perceiving, defining individuals for a problem to organizationally exist, someone has to call it to public attention. In addition, depending upon where one is in the organization or from where one views the situation, the problem may be defined differently. How a problem is differentially defined means that, in all likelihood, the mode of resolution will differ. At the same time, many people may have different problems or different definitions of problems. Thus there will be competition between them in terms of getting recognition and action. Theoretically one could isolate a linear model of a problem from emergence to recognition to discussion to action to implementation to disappearance. We suspect, given organizational life, that this process rarely occurs. But it would appear fruitful to examine this process in school districts to see what actually occurs.

Thus our most general goals at the start of the project were to identify problems as they occur in school systems, locate their contextual features, and depict their natural histories. In addition, we wanted to observe the negotiative strategies used by participants at all levels in problematic situations and determine the applicability of the metaphor of the negotiated order to school district organization. While other goals, concepts, and problems were formulated and are contained within the data, the contents of this report will focus only upon the analysis of problems and the applicability of the negotiated order model.

Methods

Since our theory directed us to actual behavior, our methodology required that we observe in the field. Since our unit of analysis was the entire school system and since it was only the two of us gathering the data, we selected school systems that we assumed would be manageable--one district's enrollment was in the neighborhood of 4,000-6,000 pupils and had 10-12 buildings and the other about 7,000-11,000 pupils and 10-15 buildings. Before choosing these sites, we considered several other possibilities. An important factor, for example, in one district, was the inability of the administrator to understand any kind of research which did not fit a psychologistic positivistic model. Another factor was the amount of school time taken in the past by researchers and the alleged need to control access. Our final decisions were based upon reasonable size, distance from home or office, and willingness of the superintendent to offer us access to the district. In the smaller district, the superintendent gave a copy of our letter to the Board and we were introduced to them at a public session. We briefly described our intentions and were grilled by one member of the administration. The Board then formally approved our request to undertake the research. Everyone was openly friendly and receptive in this district but some people, at all levels, were resistant to disclose information to us or to discuss problems openly. They maintained for some time that everything was okay, even when they and we knew (and they knew we knew) otherwise. Some of these same people avoided seeing us, gave us misinformation or obfuscated situations by trying to steer us in less troublesome directions. Notification of meetings, admission to executive sessions of the board, copies of reports and board materials were harder to obtain here than in the second district. We surmised after some time that this general problem was the result of a district with low internal morale, a history of "failures" and problems, poor public credibility, and an inability or unwillingness to confront those problems. A high degree of fatalism or "making do" characterized many in this district. Despite those problems, we were able to attend many organizational occasions, gather large amounts of information, and develop informants in every setting. We have no overall qualms about the quality or quantity of our data; only that it was more difficult to obtain and required greater effort and planning. Throughout this system, also, we did discover that people had a great deal of difficulty in giving us identities and determining what we were doing. We often had to explain and re-explain our aims and jobs. "Federal grants" usually brought much laughter.

In the second district, the superintendents responded to our letter detailing our research interest by having a conversation and then writing a letter giving us an "okay." He had apparently discussed it with his assistant superintendents and some members of the Board of Education. We were simply introduced at all meetings as researchers who would be observing decision-making and problem-solving. That usually brought laughter as well. Because the second district was twice the size of the first, we distributed a letter to the about 500 staff members describing us and our intentions. Most staff members as we later encountered them, had only a vague recollection of who we were. Once again we had to identify and re-explain

Receptiveness in this district was much better. We were quickly invited to executive sessions. Administrators were extremely willing to talk and show us around. Materials were almost always available. Staff members went out of their way to ask if we would come to their unit. We were invited to homes of board members, the administration, and teachers. Every effort was made to see that we went to school assemblies, parades, concerts, banquets, athletic events, and parties. We attribute the receptiveness of this district to their belief that they had and have a successful school system of which they are proud. While they recognized that there were concerns, issues, and difficulties, they believed that past tradition and recent accomplishment overshadowed their problems. They wanted us as researchers to take their success to our colleagues and the wider public.

As part of our agreement with the two systems and all its members, however, we promised anonymity and confidentiality. We did not disclose to either district the name or anything about the other district. We did not pass along to members within the district what another person had said or done. We have not indicated to the granting agency or to colleagues information about the districts or its staff members. All names that are included in this report are pseudonyms--from that of the community to the classroom teacher. In addition, we have altered situations, persons, figures, and histories slightly, either by commission or omission, to maintain that anonymity. No changes, however, do damage to the overall thrust of the data or analysis.

Over much of the period covered by the grant, while schools were in session, we averaged about three plus days in the field. We spent some time in every building in the districts. We spent extended amounts of time in at least one building at each level--elementary, junior high, and senior high. Some of that time was spent in classrooms, in teacher's work rooms, and in principals' offices. In addition we did take over some classes as instructors and also work as teacher's aides. The latter, we discovered, created role incongruity so we did less of that in the second district. Dee Ann Hall conducted a survey and did some interviews for each of the districts. Because of her own public school teaching experience, she was also more likely to be asked to teach.

We also attended meetings of the school board--formal, closed, and informal; administration groups--all district administrators, principals; building teacher representatives and the central administration; building staff; teacher organizations; departments; special committees--curriculum, gifted, citizen's advisory; bond campaign groups--steering committees, neighborhood organizations, local schools; service organizations; PTA's; staff-board-administration for the district and individual school, formal and informal; and the state school board and school administrator associations. There were, of course, numerous informal discussions surrounding these meetings and on "drop in" bases.

In addition, all of the major characters in the district--central administrators, board members, and some principals--were formally interviewed about the backgrounds, philosophies, experiences, and concerns. Subscriptions were also obtained to the local newspapers and

when possible the local radio and television stations were monitored. Past history was examined through a board member's scrapbook, the district's files and reports, and an authorized written history of one district. Regional accreditation reports given us by local administrators or board members also proved helpful.

We have continued gathering data in both districts past the originally proposed time and even after the grant expiration date. Our reasons are that the issues we continued to observe were of crucial significance to both districts and also of tremendous theoretical importance to our entire undertaking. To have neglected them would have severely diminished the value of the study. In addition, plans have been made to conduct retrospective and evaluative interviews with a smaller sample of the major figures in each district. Many of the original interviews were conducted early in the study before rapport was well established so that in some instances there was more rhetoric than substance. Often an unintended consequence of those interviews, however, was the development of rapport.

The study so far has generated large masses of field notes which have been typed and transcribed on many many pages. Those pages have all been read by both researchers. On some subjects and in some areas, they have been reread several times. Some coding and analysis have been conducted but those processes of interpretation and theorizing are by no means complete. Given the amount and quality of field data, leading practitioners in the field suggest that there should be a year of analysis for each year in the field. We heartily concur with that position. In addition, our perspective on research and scholarship is that it is a continuing process and a private and public dialogue. This report then must be seen as part of a process and in process and not as an end either in itself or of the deliberations about this material.

Data-gathering and data-analysis were, in addition, complicated by an eight to ten month delay in approval and funding. Instead of beginning at the start of a school year, the project started near the end of the school year. That affected our introduction to the system, the momentum of the study, and the scheduled use of our time. That also meant later on that data-gathering would have to occur simultaneously over both districts and for a longer time than anticipated. Readers also need to keep in mind that 1 1/4 time FTE was allotted to the study of the first district and 1 2/3's to the second.

Several general points are worth mentioning about the conduct of this research. No attempt was made to observe and follow everything. Locations, positions, and topics were sampled. Certain preoccupations did occur and they were followed to their conclusions. School closings, building programs and bond drives dominated both districts. Concerns with extra-curricular activities and board-administration conflict were high in both districts. Special education facilities, transformation of a junior high into a middle school, and discipline were important topics in one district. In the other, elementary curricular organization, teacher politics, and teacher evaluation were significant issues. However even when following these issues, or

focusing on particular role incumbents or studying one building, we were limited in our ability to be inclusive and exhaustive. We could not be at one place all the time nor at all places at one time. There were time gaps, one side of phone conversations, and accounts of unobserved events. Despite our primary goal of observation, we were often dependent upon verbal accounts of what transpired. Some interesting data, however, is provided by comparing accounts. Nevertheless, it does mean that a more complete study of this kind would require many more researchers.

We did notice some interesting differences in the way people responded to us that have theoretical and practical consequences. There were both advantages and disadvantages to having a married couple who were both Ph.D.'s jointly conducting the research. In one district there was a general but not total inability to conceive of a woman doctor-professor. It was Dr. and Mrs. Hall. Male administrators had an extremely difficult time accepting Dee Hall as a doctor or as a peer where they had no trouble with Peter Hall. Even women board members had a tendency to think of Dee as a housewife-mother who was simply "on leave" to do research and when it was over she would return to the home. She did, however, establish good relationships with these women. She was able, in addition, to establish rapport with the male president of the board and one of the assistant superintendents. For the record, there were no women doctors of education, philosophy, or medicine in town when the research began. Because of her own teaching experience and her own personal style, Dee Hall was able to establish excellent relationships with classroom teachers. Peter Hall's relationships were better in this district with the administrators, board members and some male classroom teachers at the high school level.

The second district gave less evidence of a sexist response. We were acknowledged as "the doctors Hall." More of the males in this district had working wives and wives in education. There also were several women administrators in the district. While not a utopia of sexual equality, they were more liberal in their attitudes and behaviors. Nevertheless, the pattern held up that Peter Hall had more open relationships with male administrators, board members and teachers while Dee Hall was better able to gather information from women--classroom teachers and administrators. On the other hand, some older male administrators felt secure enough to talk openly to Dee Hall while Peter Hall established a good relation with the female school board president.

While our relationship with the school district participants was not completely sex-linked, they did have that cast to them. Our general conclusion is that when one studies groups, organizations or communities that have both sexes in their populations (and most emphatically if the sexes are organizationally stratified), then it is valuable that the researchers include men and women. We certainly did get different insights, information, experiences, and perspectives that one of us alone could not have obtained--or certainly at best, not as quickly.

The Communities and Their School Systems

Cooley Corners is a small midwestern city of between 25,000 and 50,000 people located at the intersection of two highways. Its population is about 90% white and 10% black. The population has been relatively stable for 40 years although there appears to be much mobility into and out of the community. Residents continually, however, expect great community growth.

The city is the county seat and is located in the middle of a productive agricultural area for which it is a service and marketing center. There are a number of small manufacturing or light industries in town but no heavy industry. The community has been quite successful in attracting an increasing number of industries in the past several years. The downtown of the city, like many others, is decaying and losing businesses. The decline has been affected by the presence of two shopping centers, a dozen motels, and numerous fast-food eateries.

The city is also reasonably close to a large metropolitan area and also to a community two to three times its size for shopping, athletic events, and cultural activities. It does have a community college, over 50 churches, three good libraries, three radio stations, one daily newspaper, a hospital, two large public parks with municipal swimming pools, two movie theaters and a drive-in, many bars, few good restaurants, one disco of recent vintage, a country club, and lots of country-western music. It also has a community theater of several years, a community symphony for 40 years, and an old but small and declining Jewish community with a rabbi and its own temple. The community was once a booming bawdy railroad town but now remains a relatively sleepy stable community.

Residential patterns in the community show a very affluent suburb surrounding the country club in the northeast part of town and a less affluent but clearly middle and upper middle class housing development in the northeast but within the city limits. The black population, which is quite poor, is concentrated in the southern part of town more or less separated by the downtown, railroad tracks, and highways from the rest of town. The western part of town is dominated by small bungalows of blue-collar workers and their families. Throughout the rest of the eastern part of town, which is an old part of the community, one finds old impressive homes still lived in by prominent and wealthy families next door to smaller less imposing homes of people with lower middle and upper working class occupations and incomes. Numerous people, in all classes live outside the town in the country.

The community tends to view itself as truly American, middle-western, conservative, religious, and traditional. It is heavily Democratic in registration but favors conservatives in that party and will vote for Republican candidates on frequent occasions. Great pride is expressed about not being in, like, or near urban centers and Eastern or Western states affected by radicals, conflicts, immorality, fads, etc. Yet the community has obvious evidences of racism as well as recurring political and governmental scandals. There are

also sufficient cases of personal deviance, familial instability, and backyard gossip which conflict with the community's preferred image.

The public school system is governed by a six-member elected Board of Education and administered by a superintendent of schools and two assistant superintendents. There is one high school (1,000-1,500 students grades 9-12); one middle school (900-1,200 students grades 6-8); six-eight elementary schools (1,700-2,000 students grades K-5) and one special education center (300 students). The school district employs between 250 and 400 certificated teachers. Programs and curriculum offered by the district are quite standard. Most of the buildings are old traditional red brick schools of 50 to 90 years of age. The two exceptions are an elementary school built in the early 1960's and what was originally a junior high school built in the early 1970's. The latter building incorporated open spaces which have been visually but not aurally partitioned. School enrollments, particularly at the elementary level have declined over the past five years.

High school IQ data covering 1974-1976 indicates a distribution closely approximating national profiles. A follow-up of 1976 graduates from the high school found them to be as follows: 21% in a four year college, 38% in a community college or technical school; 28% employed, 6% in the military; and 6% unemployed. Elementary and middle school testing shows students to be above national norms on basic achievement categories. The district, however, scored below the state average on a statewide state constructed 8th grade basic skills test covering language arts, math, economics and government. School officials, however, frequently stress what they call the high-low syndrome. There is an absence of a normal curve on tests and grades. Rather there is a disproportionate number who score high and a large number of low scores with an unusually small middle range.

The history of the district reveals that two superintendents held office for 46 of the past 52 years--one for 31 years and the other for 15. The district has developed a myth about the former as the great man of education. The state department of education, according to the current superintendent, regards all of the current problems the district is facing to be due to the conservatism and parochialism of "the great man." The superintendent who served for 15 years was forced out by the board because of his weak leadership. He was said to constantly delegate responsibility up and down, to work short hours, and to be unprepared. The board in this period assumed greater authority which the two successive superintendents have sought to diminish. The superintendent who succeeded the one of 15 years was a heavy-handed domineering person who threw fear into principals and teachers. He also effectively restricted the board's domain. He did not, however, in his three years alter the system greatly and resigned to take another job in another district. The current superintendent focused initially on rebuilding staff confidence, and public support, and the building of new elementary schools and the closing of some old ones. Overall what can be said of the district is that it considers itself and is considered by others to be behind the times and conservative in its building program and educational offerings.

Meadmont is larger than Cooley Corners with a population of between 30,000 and 60,000. It likewise is located at the intersection of two highways. Its population is well over 90% white with most of the remaining percentage being black. The city and the surrounding area have shown continuing but moderate growth for some period and the expectation is that growth will continue. The city does have more industrial development than Cooley Corners with several national companies each employing over 1,000 workers and several others with 500 each. The area is experiencing some growth because of the construction of a major utility facility. On the other hand, Meadmont's primary activity is political and governmental.

The city is within several hours of two major metropolitan areas, closer to a major recreational area and an educational center with its cultural and athletic events. A shopping mall was recently opened up but the community also does have an apparently thriving downtown area. In addition another major thoroughfare has a series of fast-food restaurants, shops, and stores. Meadmont has a public college, about 50 religious institutions, one daily newspaper (morning and afternoon), 5 radio stations, one television station, three hospitals, several municipal swimming pools and more public parks than Cooley Corners, two country clubs, one public library, a historical museum, and eight movie theaters. The community also has a popular and successful community theatre as well as a community symphony. One notable fact about Meadmont is that it has a large Catholic population (about 30%-40%) which supports a number of local institutions including parochial schools. It also has large numbers of Baptists and persons of German-American heritage.

Residentially, Meadmont seems to fit more closely with typical patterns than Cooley Corners. By that, we mean that there are relatively well-defined neighborhoods and developments in terms of socio-economic status. The northeast and northwest parts of the city are the more affluent areas while there is in the south the old establishment, old wealth part of town. Near the center of town is a small poor and black residential area. The south side and north side do have sizable numbers of small bungalows with blue collar families. Middle income housing is moving in a block toward the west. Until the recent recession, numerous developments were showing many new homes.

In general Meadmont is a more affluent community than Cooley Corners. The average per household income for Meadmont is about $20,000 in comparison with $14,000 for Cooley Corners. Thirty percent of the households had over $25,000 in income in the late 1970's while only 15% did so in Cooley Corners. About 20% had under $8,000 in Meadmont compared with 36% in Cooley Corners.

Meadmont residents, like those of Cooley Corners, think of themselves as patriotic, religious, conservative midwesterners. Their representatives in the state legislature are conservative, regardless of which party they represent, although Meadmont has a higher percentage of Republicans than Cooley Corners. The newspaper in Meadmont, as in Cooley Corners, takes a strident conservative tone. Also the local government has lost credibility recently because of scandals involving corruption.

The Meadmont school district, however, is larger than the city and encompasses a population between 50,000 and 75,000. Through annexations it has greatly expanded its area, population, number of students, and transportation responsibilities. While such annexations have had some liabilities and created complexities and problems, one of the major assets is that the assessed valuation of property in the district is well over three times that of Cooley Corners and the tax rate of the former is quite low, being $1.00 less than Cooley Corner's.

Meadmont, unlike Cooley Corners, is experiencing enrollment increase rather than decline, particularly at the elementary level. Cooley Corners finds itself trying to close and consolidate elementary buildings because of enrollment decline while Meadmont is completing a new elementary school and making plans for at least one more because of enrollment pressures, expectations, and populations.

The public school system of Meadmont is governed by an elected board of six members and administered by a superintendent, two assistant superintendents, and five directors of special program areas. There is a high school complex which consists of the high school building and a newer vocational technical school which together houses over 2,000 students (grades 9-12), two junior high school buildings of nearly 500-800 students each (grades 7-8), and eight to twelve elementary buildings which house 3,000-6,000 students. There are between 350-600 certified teachers. Although the programs offered in the schools are typical there is a range of traditional, open, self-contained and subject level classrooms represented. While most of the school buildings were built in the 1950's and 1960's and in good repair, several were built in the 1920's and 1930's and therefore suffer from the effects of poor heating systems, poor insulation, and inefficient facilities for housing students and activities which results in overcrowding and sometimes unsafe conditions. The newest facility is the vocational technical school which, like many others recently built through cost sharing programs, has excellent facilities and equipment, e.g., a computer system, a printing press, complex business machinery, etc.

Standardized test scores of students at all levels of the system are above national norms. For example, average grade equivalent scores on the Stanford Achievement Test show that students in grades 1-6 are performing above grade level in all areas tested. For seventh and eighth graders taking the Stanford Achievement Test, about 70% scored at grade level or one or more years above grade level. Of the eighth graders taking the state constructed 8th grade basic skills test, about 90% passed the three sections. Seniors taking the American College Test (ACT) scored above state and national norms in all areas.

The Meadmont school system takes great pride in its history. This is reflected in two published volumes written by a former school board member which follows the schools from their beginnings, nearly 150 years ago, to the near present. The pattern of historical development in Meadmont is similar to those of other districts but is seldom so well documented. One source of continuity lies in the fact that

one superintendent held the position for 25 years. He resigned during the school year before we began our study. We therefore frequently heard comparisons between this man and the new superintendent. Most of the assistant superintendents had worked with the former superintendent for several years and the high school principal had worked under him for nearly the total 25 years of his term. He was characterized as having ruled with an iron hand, taking almost total control over decisions letting his assistants merely carry his decisions out rather than take part in the decision making process. Although he successfully led several bond campaigns and thus facilitated the building of several new schools, during his last years he began glossing over school problems to the public. One major example was that he led the public to believe that the junior high schools were in satisfactory operating conditions. When the new superintendent attempted to pass bonds to build new junior highs, the public was surprised and then resentful that "all of a sudden" these buildings were falling apart. The loss of faith in the schools was linked to the new superintendent rather than the old by community members.

Problems in School Districts

A central focus of this research was to examine and follow the careers of problems in two school systems--how they emerged, were identified, defined, solved and eradicated. In this section our discussion will be organized around the concept of problems by presenting 1) our general theoretical orientation to the analysis of social problems and the stages of their development, 2) the guiding questions which were asked about problems as they developed through the problem-solving stages, 3) the problem categories which were observed in the two school systems, 4) the dimensions of the problem-solving process by using empirical examples from the data, 5) comparisons of case study problems from the two school systems and, 6) problems as simultaneous overlapping events.

Social Problems as Collective Behavior

In order to deal with problem-solving, we must clarify the nature of a problem and a problematic situation. Stemming from the work of John Dewey and George Herbert Mead, problems occur when there is a blockage, a disjuncture, or a barrier to the completion of intended activity. When participants recognize that something is preventing them from realization, they will attempt to identify the object, determine its resistance, create action to overcome the resistance, and then carry it out.

At another level, interactionists have suggested that meaningful order is necessary for people to continue their day-to-day routines. They may become disoriented and deflected in their activities if perceptions of problematic situations intrude into their consciousness. People will act to confer meaning and cognitive consistency upon situations that they confront as problematic. Such circumstances are relative and people will not expend time and effort except as the situation seems of sufficient significance. Several attempts to specify the cognitive elements of situations which can become problematic have been made by Burke (1962) and Hewitt (1976). Burke's dramaturgical principles argue that descriptions of the scene, the actors, the purpose, the acts, and the means must be internally congruent. In other words, as an example from old western movies, the hero in the white hat does not hit the villain with a broken chair or bottle, take the money, leave town, and set up a gambling casino. Hewitt, using the work of Peter McHugh (1968) specifies six components of situations that if at variance from expectation marks a situation as disorderly or problematic. The six are typification, probability, causality, means-ends relationships, normative standards, and substantive congruency. Situations will be seen as problematic if the behavior in it is atypical of its members, improbable under the circumstances, inexplicable in the light of conditions, technically inappropriate to the goals being sought, morally wrong, unrealistic, i.e. dissensual as to the sharing of perspectives about the situation. Resolutions of the problematic elements often involve, as we shall indicate later, talk about such situations in order to arrive at a sense of order and/or a return to routine activity or new joint action.

Collective behavior is a field of study thought of, by many, as residual to and distant from institutional or routine behavior.

Its topics include rumor, disasters, crowds, fashions, mass behavior, public opinion, and social movements. The interactionist perspective has been used to show that the perceived gap between collective and institutional behavior is much narrower than supposed. Ralph Turner said that "The study of collective behavior is the study of the processes through which coordinated behavior arises and changes under the control of emergent normative definitions when the conventional normative structure is internally conflicting or inapplicable to the situation at hand" (1964:130). Collective behavior will occur because there are no norms for a new situation or there are contradictory proposed norms and/or there is absence or disagreement about collective decision-making and action. To overcome the problematics of the situation, the participants will engage in interaction to arrive at collective definitions of the situation, appropriate norms, and effective organization.

Social problems constitute the extreme or end of a continuum of problematic situations. Generally sociological formulations of social problems have been shaped by two distinct perspectives. One is best characterized in terms of presentation of objective conditions. This approach examines social conditions and observes that this is a discrepancy between reality and some proper or ideal state of society. It argues that the conditions, structural arrangements, and existing beliefs are dysfunctional for prosperity and health of a social order (Merton, 1971). Critics point out that, independent of whether it is theoretically and methodologically possible, proponents of the objective conditions approach take as social problems what "the public," influentials, and/or sizeable segments of the society call social problems. Such problems or issues are defined by "the society" to be threatening, undesirable, harmful, intolerable; to be caused by human action; and to be avoidable, changeable, and soluable.

Using this criticism, interactionists have argued for a second approach which views social problems as process. Blumer's thesis is that social problems are products of a process of collective definition (1971). The appropriate sociological study of social problems is to examine this process from initial recognition of a problem to its acceptance by many as a problem to decisions about how to deal with it and eventual actual implementation of some plan of action. Problems should be studied then according to their natural history as they move through a series of possible stages with each one facilitating, hampering and influencing the interstage movement and intra- stage processes. According to Kitsuse and Spector (1973) different casts of characters, different kinds of activities, and different dilemmas occur during the different stages. All proponents of this approach recognize that social problems have political aspects and involve the operations of conflicting groups, interests and intentions. Not everyone will want a problem recognized or solved because its continued existence is in their interest. They recognize that most problems that some people assert exist will not receive much attention or action; that those that do will be defined and dealt with in ways different than the original recognizers intended; and that the implemented plans will often fail to meet criteria of resolution. Thus the emergence and identification of problems and issues,

the charting and defining of alternatives, the debating and deciding upon resolutions, the allocation of resources and personnel, the implementation and evaluation of action is a political process composed of negotiations, informal and formal, and influenced by the distribution of resources and power utilization (Hall, 1972).

The significance of collective definitions for all of this is that, from an interactionist perspective, meaning is behavioral, how an object is defined connotes a way of acting toward it. If decreasing test scores is a problem and the reason for it is said to be poor tests, poor instruction, poor students, then different corrective actions follow. If poverty is due to lazy people, fatalistic subculture, unemployment, or capitalism, then different reforms ought to emerge.

A number of scholars have proposed natural history sequences of social problem processes [Fuller and Myers (1941), Becker (1966), Ross and Staines (1972), Spector and Kitsuse (1973) and Blumer (1971)]. Although there are some differences, there are basic similarities. We began our research using Blumer as a sensitizing and tentative formulation and aimed at the construction of a grounded theory of the natural history of problems. Blumer's five stages are: 1) the emergence of a social problem; 2) the legitimation of the problem; 3) the mobilization of action with regard to the problem; 4) the formulation of an official plan; and 5) the transformation of the official plan in its empirical implementation.

The circumstances surrounding the emergence of a problem are not at all clear. Sociologists do not know what events or conditions are likely to be problems or how problems are recognized and organized. Staines and Ross (1972) note that a problem is a discrepancy between some ideal and real state but that there are differences between what is defined as both ideal and real. In addition, there are variations in the tolerability of gaps between ideal and real. It is also true that in the context of social life that people are aware of multiple problems and cannot attend to many of them. Some individuals and groups recognize problems and live with them for long periods of time because they view them to be in the nature of things or are powerless to alter them. What may lead to their becoming public issues is not a change in the gap or increased perception but an alteration in resource distributions and structural conditions. This is one of the major findings of the resource management/mobilization school. We assumed, as a starting place, that the career or a problem began when an individual or group decided that a given condition was sufficiently problematic that they believed some action was required and they reported it to some other party for purposes of gaining acceptance and appropriate action. All of the writers on the subject believe that power influences recognition, i.e. the more resources a group has and uses to assert that something is a problem the more likely that others will accept that assertion.

Blumer (1971) suggests that we need to look at adventitious happenings, the role of agitation and violence, the role of interest groups, political figures, and mass media in determining whether

a problem emerges. Spector and Kitsuse (1973) state that acceptance of a claimed problem is dependent upon general vs. specific dissatisfaction, the ability to fix responsibility, and specify a remedy. Ross and Staines (1972), Spector and Kitsuse (1973), Hartjen (1977) all argue that the relationship between the media and officialdom and the recognizing group have primary significance in carrying the problem forward.

Obviously a number of things can happen here. Powerful figures and groups can shut off recognition. Asserting claiments may lose their constituency, give up hope, fail to mobilize. Some action may occur so that the issue dissolves because they are satisfied or they may be "cooled out." Some alleged problems occur routinely and can be handled routinely. Others are unexpected and can expand beyond control.

Stokes and Hewitt (1976) develop the concept of aligning actions to include verbal strategies designed to link conduct with cultural ideals and re-establish joint action when there are problematic situations. Such strategies include the use of disclaimers (Hewitt and Stokes, 1975), avowals and imputation of motives (Mills, 1940), accounts (Scott and Lyman, 1968), and quasi-theories (Hewitt and Hall, 1973). Thus the party who receives the claim or assertion of a problem may nip the career of the problem by, for example, explaining it away, apologizing and accepting responsibility, or deflecting the substantive issue into a technical process.

The distinction between the first stage and the second, the legitimation of a problem, is not perfect. Blumer says to keep going the problem must "acquire a necessary degree of respectability in the recognized arenas of public discussion" (1971:303). Ross and Staines (1972) are more helpful when they point out that public recognition is dependent on issue salience--the perceived importance of the problem and issue legitimacy--the perceived genuineness or reality of the problem. Legitimacy here means that when you say something is a problem, you can convince others that it is indeed a problem. Salience is equivalent to what Manis (1974) calls the seriousness of social problems encompassing primacy, magnitude, and severity. Primacy means the causal impact or multiplicity of influences of the problem. Magnitude refers to the extent or frequency of the problem occurrence. Severity refers to the degree or level of harmfulness.

This stage obviously means taking the problem beyond the original proposer and recipient. Blumer notes that some problems, at this level, get rushed along to legitimacy by strong and influential backing. Spector and Kitsuse (1973) recognize that official and powerful agencies and figures may lend prestige to the original proposer but may also take over the management of the problem and overshadow the initial proponent. Indeed, at this level, one would become interested in those who endorse or reject the definition of a problem as legitimate.

Getting the message to the people, if that is necessary, requires the media. The norm of investigative reporting raises the likelihood of media interest. Media personnel, however, can be cynical of prophets of doom or wrong-doing. They also have their own values and

processes which influence the content of news. Media content can assign legitimacy or discredit a problem. The problem can be played up or given back-page coverage. Ross and Staines (1972) are quite concerned about the relation between government and the media. They believe government officials use the media proselytize official images and interpretations of problems. They can do this because 1) they control and manipulate the flow of information; 2) they by definition are official and therefore newsworthy and can dominate the stage; 3) the media need the officials more than the reverse; and 4) the media may champion governmental views. These are not necessarily true but, at least, reflect a potential problem for citizen or lower level bureaucratic assertions of harmful conditions.

Assuming the emergence and legitimation of an issue, we move into mobilization of action. While not absent in the first two stages, the activity here involves clashes between various participants about the appropriate definition of the problem of as Blumer says, "of controversy, of differing depictors, and of diverse claims." It is also here that different solutions become proposed flowing from the varying definitions. Success in bringing a problem to public attention does not always mean the ability to control the dominant definition. Ross and Staines (1972) acknowledging Schattschneider (1960) and Crenson (1971) point out that making an issue a public one is risky because the involvement of greater numbers of people means the more likely other paticipants can effect their own influence. At this level, of course, one becomes interested in coalitions which develop as well as interactive strategies of resource utilization which affect the definitional process.

One set of activities that often occurs at this stage is the establishment of public hearings and study commissions. While it is possible that the proposing group can hold its own definition and consequent resolution, such formats can deflect action, confuse the audience, allow other individuals and groups to offer alternative and dominant definitions and, of course, to continue to deny the salience and legitimacy of the issue. Hearings and study commissions do often result in more standard formulations of the problem and resolutions within conventional means.

At this stage it is not atypical to find two or more groups or individuals speaking for the partisans and the community in addition to groups and officials who stand to lose power, oppositional political and bureaucratic officials. Each of these can offer different definitions as to the nature of the problem, its cause(s), responsibility for cause, and proposed solutions and delegation of responsibility to effect solutions. The constituencies of the proponents and opponents may find themselves split on the salience of the issue and the modes of resolution, but perhaps even more important on the ways to deal with officials and the constituency's opposition. The use of confrontation, bargaining, cooptation, and persuasion all influence the development of mobilization. One can also expect much use of impression management to depict the dramaturgical elements in order to mobilize larger segments of the community (cf. Hall, 1972). Some, however, may not want greater involvement and will seek to constrain mobilization to ensure the likelihood of greater control.

One additional point in the mobilization of action has to deal with causal attribution. The two basic distinctions are between personal attribution and system attribution. If problems are seen as caused by persons, then the solution is to do something to persons, either train them, replace them, or punish them. If blame is placed upon the system or the situation, individuals are guiltless or not responsible. Solutions require altering the structure or situational conditions. Ross and Staines (1972) point out how authorities, underdog partisans, privileged partisans, policy advisors and planners, and ideologues have different interests in selecting one or another form of causal attribution.

It is quite plausible that because insufficient concern is generated, because no side can sufficiently dominate a definition, or because the problem is shunted aside for study, there is no advance to a formulation of an official plan. If such occurs and a plan is formulated, Blumer says "the official plan is almost always a product of bargaining, in which diverse views are accommodated. Compromises, concessions, tradeoffs, deference to influence, response to power, and judgments of what may be workable--all play a part in the final formulation" (1971:304).

The development, the possible passage, and the proclamation of the plan are activities which may be quite distant from the concerned constituencies. At this level, those accustomed to the "corridors of power" will often be more influential than citizen groups. Legislators and/or top administrators also have their own interests, past experiences, and future intentions to take into account in plan formulation. It is also here that what becomes exceedingly important is to whom solution and monitoring of the problem is assigned and with what allocation of personnel, monies, and resources.

Blumer's acknowledgement of "judgments of what may be workable" is crucially important. We move from lofty arguments and broad definitions to practical decisions and assignments in the context of already existing institutions, constrained resources, and other problems. What is "workable" means connecting means to ends in contexts of what can be afforded. Many observers are aware that frequently in the next stage of implementation the plan fails often as we will mention because the assigned agency has interests which deflect the plan. But most frequently, we believe, the basis for failure is set in the formulation stage because the legislative or administrative solution is mild compared to the problem, because the compromises effectively emasculate attempts to resolve it, because too little money, too few personnel, and too few resources are granted to the implementing agency. Murray Edelman (1964) long ago skillfully pointed out how legislation and policies may be no more than symbolic reassurances and definitely not real solutions to problems.

As part of this, it is crucial to examine which agency is assigned the resolution of the problem, whether it be a new or an old one or reorganization of previously existing ones. The creation of a new agency may mean more commitment to problem resolution or it could mean less by virtue of spreading out modes of dealing with a larger problem of which the focal one is a symptom or a secondary

or tertiary spin-off. Locating responsibility in an existing agency can mean organizational overload and political in-fighting or it may mean adding another weapon in the arsenal of larger problem-resolution because of centralization and coordination of effort.

Official plans may not be formulated because they get legislatively defeated or because of initial assignment (another key variable in this area) never get out of committee. Legislative and policy-making bodies may not find time (or want to find time) to deal with them before they go home. Other problems, defined to be more pressing, may emerge and get favorable treatment pushing the focal one back-stage. Plans may not be formulated because proponents cannot agree and become weakened by schism, because public concern lessens due to diminished media coverage, or because opponents overwhelm the proponents by generating more resources and more public opinion.

Many observers, including Blumer, assert that there are too few studies of the process of official plan implementation. Many seemingly assume that the problem gets solved. Those studies that have been done, e.g. Lipset (1950) find bureaucratic resistance to original intentions or the development of modifications and unforeseen blockages. Bernstein (1955) notes bureaucratic constraints become generated even with the best of intentions. Part of the reason for development here is, according to Blumer, there is a new process of collective definition and bargaining. Those who are in danger of losing advantages act to restrict those losses and those who gain advantages act to extend those opportunities. In addition, the assigned agency develops vested interests in continued existence of the problem or of continuing redefinition of it or their scope of activity.

Part of the problem at this level may not relate to the problem itself as much as procedures and relationships of the agency in dealing with the problem and the original proponents. Spector and Kitsuse (1973) develop the last two stages of their natural history cycle to cover the negative reaction of claimants and their formation of parallel or counter institutions to treat the problem, e.g. private, free or open schools. Agencies, like regulatory commissions, designed for the public interest, until recently with the formation of consumer groups, have no organized constituency. They have been in closer contact with and influenced by the organizations they were to regulate than the people in whose interests they were presumed to regulate. Consequently there may develop a sense of doubt and cynicism among the public. They may, however, or many of them become apathetic about the problem because they give up or because they assume resolution. On the other hand, they may be participants along with political and bureaucratic officials to re-negotiate mandates and procedures, replace responsible personnel, or create new agencies. There might also be the creation of watch-dog groups, consumer advisory panels, or liasons with the community.

It seems worthwhile to point to the entire area of administrative justice and the role of adjudication in the implementation process. Various segments of a community, either for or against implementation

or a style of implementation may institute legal proceedings to delay, overturn, speed-up, or, in fact, bring implementation. They are, often, varying forms of bargaining and negotiation attendant to this process. A similar form is internal to bureaucracy or involving an interorganizational linkage in which some level appeals a ruling, argues for a delay, challenges an interpretation, demands the formulation of a plan to implement the plan. As is evident in school desegregation situations, negotiations between school districts and HEW are long, complex, and frequent. There are numerous exchanges about the meaning of law and the approximations of particular plans to the interpreted meaning of law. Those situations are increasingly complicated by the plan of legislatures and courts upon the ongoing negotiations. Our conclusion is that implementation is not automatic nor simple and requires intensive analysis.

Empirical Questions for Stages of Problem-Solving

Each stage in the problem-solving process was guided by sets of questions which could be answered from empirical data. The questions regarding problem identification focused on the following:

1. Why, when and under what circumstances did individuals decide a condition was sufficiently problematic that action was required? (What kinds of descriptions and explanations did school personnel provide when asked under what circumstances they would decide a condition was sufficiently problematic that action would be required, under what circumstances had they done this in the past and under what circumstances had this existed as an individual or group decision?)

2. If a condition was considered sufficiently problematic for action, to whom and under what circumstances was it reported for the purposes of gaining acceptance and appropriate action? (Did different levels of personnel in the school system see different channels as appropriate for gaining recognition and action for problems?)

3. Were there situations under which conditions were perceived as problematic yet action was not sought? (Recognition of a problem depended on the power of the individuals or groups involved. It was possible therefore that the less powerful were less willing to seek action for a problem because they had experienced difficulty in obtaining acceptance and action in the past.)

4. If individuals or groups had been hesitant or slow to seek action, why had they hesitated in seeking this action? What conditions led to the problem emerging at the time that it did?

5. What conditions were viewed as problematic by the observers that were taken-for-granted by the participants?

6. What criteria was used by participants in assessing situations as problems? To what extent were the elements developed by Hewitt used by participants or applicable to their assessments, e.g. atypical, improbable, inexplicable, inappropriate means, morally wrong, and unrealistic? The kinds of questions asked of school personnel in formal interviews and probed in informal discussions were guided by these questions.

The same kinds of questions were asked as we reviewed and analyzed our field notes. As problems emerged and were identified we completed Blumer's first stage in the natural history of a problem. Identification of problems however was an ongoing process, i.e. problems continuously emerged, overlapped and sometimes merged with other problems. Problems were also characterized by their contextual features or described in terms of the contextual features of negotiation which surrounded them. The contextual features of any problem affected and were affected by the identification of a situation as problematic. We asked the following kinds of questions regarding the contextual features of negotiating the identification of problems.

1. How many negotiators were involved, what was their relative experience in negotiating and whom did they represent? (What level in the organizational structure was represented--administrative, teachers, board members or community? Some interactions involved administrators while others were represented by administrators and teachers.)

2. Were the negotiations one-shot, repeated, sequential, serial, multiple, or linked? (Which of these patterns emerged from observations of negotiated situations, i.e. in meetings or interviews with school personnel?)

3. What was the relative balance of power exhibited by the respective negotiating parties in the negotiation itself?

4. What was the nature of their respective stakes in the negotiation? (What did negotiators stand to gain or lose through negotiation? Did negotiators (school personnel) stand to lose power, resources or monies . . . or perhaps their job if the stakes were serious enough?)

5. What options were available for avoiding or discontinuing negotiation? (Were there some situations in which teachers, for example, felt were fruitless to pursue through negotiation? Were teachers able to give us examples from past experiences of situations which provided no options for discontinuing negotiation? How was this situation affected by the balance of power of those negotiating?)

6. What was the visibility of the transactions to others, i.e. what were their covert or overt characters? (Were negotiations held in an open setting, e.g. a school board meeting when the public was present, or in closed settings, e.g. in executive sessions open only to school board members and superintendents? Did covert transactions result in overt negotiations, e.g. did a teacher who was sanctioned by a principal later seek support from an outside agency (CTA or state teachers association)? For the closed meetings we observed, how did negotiation strategies differ from those held in public? What kinds of strategies were used in covert settings to plan for actions to be used in later overt settings?)

7. What was the clarity of legitimacy boundaries of the issues negotiated? (Were boundaries clearly cut or more ambiguous? Were negotiations reflecting a concern with the issue at hand or did they reflect a link to other problems? Was negotiation linked to power plays or attempts to gain status which were used in future negotiations?)

8. What were the number of issues to be negotiated? (Was a general problematic area segmented into a series of related issues, e.g. did a problem such as desegregation become segmented into issues related to redistricting, bussing, program implementation and policy formation? How were issues linked in negotiative settings, i.e. did the discussion of one issue necessitate discussion of other issues which related to or were contingent on the first issue?)

9. How were specific contexts linked to other contexts? To what extent were options limited or facilitated by these linkages? How conscious were the participants of the linkages and their effects? How did participants use these linkages?

The questions asked in the above section were both important for problem identification and for understanding the development of the problem through its development. This was reflected as we followed a problem or problems through its natural history. The following kinds of questions were asked through the stages of the development of the problem through the process of resolution.

1. Emergence of a problem. This stage was discussed in an earlier section as a distinct process as it was viewed as a key to the development of our analysis, i.e. problematic situations and problem solving can only be examined if a problem(s) exists. Given the key role of problem emergence we focused on identification of problems in our research, e.g. our interviews and observations focused on definitions of problems by personnel as well as served as the basis for our own analysis of field notes.

2. Legitimation of a problem. Our initial set of activities in gathering field data involved cataloguing and categorizing problems. In the next phases of research we chose from a range of these problems and followed their development as they proceeded and/or terminated through time. Depending upon the circumstances in the field, we focused on a range of problems which included one single problem or several simultaneously occurring problems. We obviously made decisions about the number and range of problems we attended to during any given situation or time period.

A. What was the perceived reality of the problem? (Part of the answer to this question depended on who was presenting the problem and most important, the position of power held by the person.)

B. Could others be convinced it was a problem? (If others could not be convinced that a problem existed then the development of the problem terminated. This is not to say that the person(s) presenting the problem terminated their definition of the condition as problematic. The person(s) may not have

wished to take any further action, however, they may only have waited until mobilization of their resources or the attention of the media demanded that action be taken on the situation.)

C. What was the salience of the problem? What was the impact of the problem (primary), what was its extent or frequency (magnitude), and what was its degree or level of harmfulness (severity)? (The answers to these questions were central in observing the development of a problem through future stages.)

D. Who endorsed or rejected the problem as legitimate? (Answers to this question could be found, in part, in our description of the contextual features of negotiation.)

E. What was the involvement of the media? (Was the media being used as a way of controlling the flow of information by officials?)

3. Mobilization of action.

A. What controversies (even did controversies) arose between participants over the definition of the problem?

B. What were the various solutions which began to emerge? Did one solution seem to dominate over the others?

C. What kinds of coalitions developed? (Who was in these coalitions and what levels did they represent?)

D. What plans were made for resource mobilization? (What resources were utilized and who controlled these resources?)

E. Were public hearings held? Were special study committees set up? What was the make-up of the committees? What role did the media play in their presentation of the activities of the public hearings?

F. In what ways were proponents and opponents split over the issue?

G. What causes were attributed to persons and what causes were attributed to the system? (Who was considered guilty? Who was making the attributions?)

4. Formulation of an official plan.

A. Who was assigned to monitor the problem? (What level was represented?)

B. How were personnel, monies and resources allocated for the solution?

C. How well did the solution fit the problem? (This question was not answerable unless the plan was implemented.)

D. Were solutions only symbolic reassurances for the agitated on the part of the powerful? Were these real solutions to the problems or attempts to pacify demands being made?

E. Were plans formulated at all or did the problem terminate at this stage? Did recognition alone reduce concern about the problem? Was the problem tabled or deferred for later discussion?

5. Official plan implementation.

A. Did the plan implementation include the introduction of new policy? What form did the policy take?

B. What was the reaction of the claimants to the plan? Did its implementation lead to counter-proposals?

C. Did re-negotiations occur?

D. Did the plan lead to the definition of new problems?

Examining the identification, definition and resolution of problems in discrete units, although necessary for explanatory and methodological reasons, was not representative of our view of the development of problems in a school system. We want to stress the perspective that these units were a part of a process; all parts of the process were affected by and affected the other parts. For example, problem identification was influenced by the contextual features around which negotiation occurred, while power relationships of the participants affected the contextual features of the situation, the negotiative strategies used as the problem developed, affected the plan chosen and the implementation of the plan. All points in problem development negotiations were affected by not only power relationships but the kinds of talk chosen to align actions and the abilities of the participants at impression management.

As observers we could back off from the daily occurrences in schools and in meetings and begin to analyze the patterns which were developing over time. As Farberman (1975) points out, the participants at one level of an organizational structure may have not been aware of the total picture, i.e. s/he could not view the whole structural processes which were occurring. The organization became a series of networks nested within other networks. We felt it was the responsibility of the researchers to have viewed the workages between networks or levels within the school system while we concomitantly backed off to view the total school system as a set of interrelated networks.

Problem Categories

Problem categories were developed and expanded as situations arose around which participants took some form of action. The problem categories listed in this section represent the complete range of problems we observed during the two years we were in Cooley Corners and Meadmont. Although the categories themselves came from a systematic coding of field notes and interviews, their exhaustiveness was

further determined by a cross examination of the same data by listing problems chronologically and by coding them as instances of either within or between level interaction. A final review of the data was done using the categories as a basis for determining if all situations were codable and thus inclusive in the categories (e.g., did a problem occur which could not be coded?)

We initially proposed that problems would fall into five general categories: economic, legal, physical-maintenance, curriculum, personnel and disciplinary. The 23 categories presented here could basically be collapsed into the original five but are more descriptive and inclusive of the range of problems observed. The 167 subcategories represent the entire range of specific problems which occurred in both school systems. (See Figure 1.)

An important point in using these categories is that although they descriptively represent an exhaustive presentation of the data, they overlap when one examines a particular problem. The categories represent the overriding nature of the problem, yet aspects of any problem may fall into other subcategories. The discussion in the following sections will describe the overlapping quality of problem categorization more clearly.

Problem Dimensions

Blumer's stages were useful in the examination of an individual problem, i.e., any given problem taken from our categories in comparing problems, however, we found some overriding characteristics which helped distinguish them along certain dimensions. To undertand the multiplicity of simultaneously occurring problems, problems were compared around a common set of dimensions. These dimensions were: situational context, core issue, source, emergence, magnitude, duration, resolution, intensity and negotiation. These dimensions were used as defined in the following section.

1) Situational context refers to the setting in which the problem occurred. The notation of setting links to a particular level of the school system, e.g., a school board meeting, the high school principal's office or the teacher's lounge.

2) The core issue is defined as a situation which has become identified as a problem. The core issue should correlate with a problem category or sub-category, e.g., paying the bills, breaking up a fight or repairing potholes.

3) The source refers to the origin of the problem as either

a) internal, i.e., which arises within the school system, e.g., firing a teacher or disagreements between a principal and teacher, or

b) external, i.e., which derives from outside the school system, e.g., state funds, title programs, or snow days.

4) Emergence refers to the level of expectation about the perceived existence of the problem, i.e., was it a planned or unplanned event, was it expected to occur? There are two types of emergent patterns, which are

Figure 1

PROBLEM CATEGORIES

Associations

Accreditation
Attendance at Meetings
Committees
Costs-Dues
Membership: Administration
Principals
School Board
Staff
Teachers

Buildings and Building Programs

Annexation
Bond Drives
Consolidation
Destruction or Closing of Old Buildings
Enrollments--Decreases and Increases
Land Purchases
Land Sales
Land Use
Moves to New Buildings
Non-school Use of Facilities
Renovation
Safety Codes
Security
Site Selection
Space Shortages
Space Utilization
Vacating

Discipline

Alcohol, Cigarette and Drug Use
Detensions
Dress (codes)
Dropouts
Enforcement
Expulsions
Fights
Reports
Tardies
Thefts
Truancy

Communication

Failure to Inform Others
Failure to Listen
Failure to Receive Information
Failure to Respond
Misinformation
Misunderstanding

Curriculum

Book Adoptions
Coordination of Levels
Course Offerings
Junior High vs. Middle School
Mainstreaming
Open vs. Closed Classrooms
Scheduling
Special Education
Student Contracts
Student Performances
Testing
Vertical vs. Horizontal Grouping
Vocational - Technical Programs

Federal/State Legislation

Assessment/Reassessment
Cost Sharing
Free Lunch Program
Laws
Title Programs

Financial-Economic

Bids
Bills
Bonding Capacity
Budgetary
Computerized Accounting
Federal Funds
Fiscal Year
Fuel
Inflation
Land Purchases
Local Funds
Reassessment
Salaries
Setting Levies
State Funds
Taxes

Extra-Curricular Activities

Booster Clubs
Coaches/Sponsors
Events: Academic
Dances - Parties
Dramatic
Musical
Sports
Morale/School Spirit
Travel

Facility Maintenance

Cleaning/Sanitation
Climate Control
Repairs
Vandalism

Governmental Agencies

Funding Sources
Meeting Standards
Regulation Compliance

Instruction

Classroom Methods
Class Size
Grade Reports
Grouping
In-service Training
Team Teaching

Legal

Expulsion
Law Suits
Property Ownership

Media

Bias
Extent of Coverage
Intrusiveness

Within Levels: Administrative
Principals
School Board
Staff
Teachers

Within Schools: Elementary
Junior High
High School

Personnel

Contracts
Evaluation
Firings
Hirings
Health Insurance
Health Status
Interviews
Morale
Morals
Reassignments
Resignations
Retirements
Scheduling
Sick/Personal Leaves
Substitute Teachers
Tenure

Personnel Relationships

Between Levels:
Administrator-Principal
Administrator-School Board
Administrator-Staff
Administrator-Teacher
Principal-School Board
Principal-Staff
Principal-Teacher
School Board-Staff
School Board-Teacher
Staff-Teacher

Between Schools:
Elementary-Elementary
Elementary-Junior High
Elementary-High School
High School-Junior High
Junior High-Junior High

Racial

Incidents
Integration

Relationships with Non-System Professionals

Architects
Bus Companies
Business Owners
Police
State Department of Education

Procedural

Chain of Command
Emergency Drills
Faculty Orientations
Record Keeping
Reports
Setting Calendars of Events

Public Relations

Transportation

Accidents
Buses
Fuel Costs
Parking Facilities
Routing
Traffic Congestion

Weather

School Closings
Scheduling

School-Community Relationships

Advisory Boards
Parents
Parochial Schools
Survey Analyses

Students

(See codes which deal with specific student related problems--discipline, testing, grading, etc.)

a) anticipated or those which are expected and planned for, e.g., setting the budget, class sizes, or writing federal reports, and

b) unanticipated or those which are unexpected, are not planned for e.g., vandalism, losing a football game or the death of a teacher.

5) The magnitude of the problem refers to the extent to which it affects levels of the school system, e.g., school board, administration, principals, teachers, students and the community.

6) The duration of the problem refers to its longevity over time. Because these dimensions are comparative, actual time sequences are of little value taken independently. Therefore, the categories refer to general ways of looking at the longevity of a problem as compared to other problems which occur in the school year. There are four types of problem duration, which are:

a) short-term or those which are resolved quickly and expediently, e.g., granting a teacher personal leave, punishing a student caught smoking or accepting a resignation.

b) long-term or those which extend over large segments of time, e.g., planning a bond campaign, law suits, or firing a tenured teacher.

c) cyclical or those which are recurring or which are repeated periodically, e.g., snow days, purchases or expendable materials, or breakdowns in plumbing or heating systems.

d) Calendrical or those which are united to specific times of the school year, e.g., class scheduling for the beginning of school, scheduling activities around special events (homecoming, a Christmas assembly, etc.), or setting the yearly schedule (number of days in attendance, start and stop days, inclusion of holidays, etc.).

7) The intensity of a problem refers to the general emotional involvement of the personnel involved in problem resolution, i.e., did it induce anger, anxiety, or fear or was it dealt with in a passive manner? There are four types of problem intensity, which are

a) low or situations where involvement arouses little emotion, e.g., where decisions are made on routine matters such as paying bills, turning in absentees, or determining bus routes.

b) medium or situations where involvement arouses some emotion, e.g., where controversy arises over situations thought to be routine such as firing a nontenured teacher who argues the case, a parent questioning a school board member about the punishment of their child by a principal or a teacher not being granted a leave for which they feel they are entitled.

c) high or situations where involvement arouses considerable emotion, e.g., community involvement over school closings, firing a tenured teacher or a parent conference where a student is charged with theft.

d) variable or situation where involvement arouses a range of emotion from high to low, depending on those who are involved and the point in time under consideration, e.g., teacher salary negotiations, a bond issue failure and later resubmission for vote, or relationships between personnel such as the football coach and band director during conflict over use of the football field vs. lack of contact during the off season.

8) The resolution of a problem refers to the general organizational procedures called upon to deal with the solution to the issue in question. There are five types of resolution identified, which are:

a) bureaucratic or that procedure which follows lines of authority, written rules or other policy oriented behaviors, e.g., following the chain of command, determining bonding capacity, recording school attendance, or requiring attendance at meetings.

b) garbage can or that procedure which draws on several related or unrelated ways of dealing with a problem which may or may not deal directly with the problem, i.e., they may passify, divert or disperse the resolution process, e.g., using a bond campaign as a way of closing schools, redistributing enrollments, or getting rid of ineffective principals, school board challenging facility maintenance procedures as a way of pointing to a weak superintendent, or increasing rules for discipline to deal with noise in middle scool resulting from lack of walls.

c) tabling or that procedure which defers the resolution to another point in time, i.e., no actual resolution is made at the time of occurrence, e.g., getting further bids on proposed purchase items, school board members asking for further information from administrators before taking a vote, or not deciding on a textbook adoption until several series are examined.

d) partial resolution or that procedure in which one segment of the problem is resolved or the intensity of the problem is reduced, i.e., the actual core of the problem is not solved, e.g., salary negotiations (giving teachers increased monies in one area and none in another), adding an assistant administrator to handle discipline because the principal does not (but not firing the principal), or moving an ineffective but tenured teacher to a new instructional area (but not firing them).

e) dissolved resolution refers to those problems for which no solution is found, i.e., the issue is left in the air, ignored, or forgotten, e.g., the school board trying to fire an assistant administrator whom the superintendent strongly supports, constructing walls in an open school for which there are no funds, or improving the quality of school lunches within current funds and guidelines.

9) The negotiation of a problem refers to the amount of give-and-take between personnel before a resolution is reached. There are three types of negotiation patterns, which are

a) reciprocal or situations where give-and-take exists in equitable amounts, personnel are listening to the other and taking their responses under consideration into the formulation of their own responses, e.g., principals planning in-service training based on teachers' preferences, teachers negotiating with administrators about abolishing lunchroom duty, or the superintendent deciding on the start of school based on the preferences of teachers.

b) one-party dominance occurs where opinions of others are sought but do not influence the eventual outcome of the situation; one side listens but only as a strategy of impression management, e.g., holding a public meeting of the school board to hear community responses to school closings when school board members have made decisions for their vote prior to the meeting, having dinner meetings where teachers can meet board members but at which board members sit together and teachers sit together, or an administration which meets with teachers about salary schedules but has already set a schedule which allocates funds as they see most reasonable.

c) An ultimatum occurs when no negotiation takes place between personnel, e.g., the superintendent telling teachers they must vote for a bond or say nothing at all, the principal issuing student detensions, or the principal telling teachers they will sponsor a party.

The dimensions described here represent a systematic way of comparing problems or a way of understanding the characteristics of a problem in comparison with other problems, i.e., their relative magnitude, duration, intensity, etc. In its simplest form, the process would appear as in Figure 2. In this example a school board member(s) was questioning the expenditure of what they defined as an excessive amount for the product obtained by the administration, e.g., for light bulbs.

In Cooley Corners this was a frequent event at school board meetings. The process included a school board member asking an administrator why X number of dollars was spent on light bulbs, the administrator responding by explaining the legitimacy of the purchase, and the school board member accepting the explanation as legitimate. The two-level interaction was of extremely brief duration, involved no emotional response--only a factual presentation, was resolved through bureaucratic legitimation and involved no negotiation, i.e., the superintendent issued the final word. Questioning the bills was an anticipated, internal event, therefore, superintendents planned responses which justified and legitimated expenditures as reasonable and within the budget.

The characteristic dimensions of any given problem as compared to another problem showed interesting variability. The same was true if the same problem was compared when it occurred at two points in time. An example of this could be found by taking the simple situation of paying the bills. Some situations were not as easily solved although equally innocuous. Figure 3 again shows the light bulb example

Figure 2

PROBLEM DIMENSIONS

Situational context: Cooley Corners school board meeting

Issue: Paying the bills: Light bulbs

Source: Internal

Magnitude: Two-level: School board and administration

Duration: Short-term

Intensity: Low

Resolution: Bureaucratic

Negotiation: None

Figure 3

PROBLEM DIMENSIONS

	Time 1	Time 2
Situational context	Cooley Corners School Board Meeting	same
Issue	Paying the bills: Light bulbs	Paying the bills: football cleats
Source	Internal	Internal
Magnitude	Two-level	Two-level
Duration	Short term	Cyclical
Intensity	Low	Medium
Resolution	Bureaucratic	Tabling
Negotiation	None	One-party dominance

and compares it to the purchase of football cleats. In the case of the cleats, the bid occurred in a cyclical pattern, i.e., periodically cleats were purchased. To the school board it appeared that an inordinate amount of cleats were being purchased and at illogical times of the year. They questioned their purchase, their durability and cost whenever they appeared on the list of bids. Without exception, the administration won out, i.e., they effectively justified cost and need, the board always approved but with reluctance.

Problems such as these occurred frequently on a day-to-day basis, but only represented a portion of the total range of problems and represented those simple in nature. Although more complex problems involved the same dimensions as the simple problems, they also required a more complex analysis to explain the problem resolution process. In the next section a case study problem has been selected to describe and explain the increasing complexity of problems which were of greater magnitude, duration and intensity.

Problem Resolution Process: Case Histories, Stages and Dimensions

In this section, the discussion of the problem resolution process will be organized around a description of the case history of a problem, an analysis of its stages of development, and a discussion of its dimensions. The first problem was one which occurred at the Cooley Corners middle school. It involved the use of a contract system among eighth grade language arts teachers and its demise.

Case history: Cooley Corners middle school contracts. The Cooley Corners middle school contract system had been used every year, throughout the school year, since the school's opening seven years earlier. The team of three teachers, according to informants, had not changed the substance of the contracts during that time. This led to criticism on the part of the high school language arts teachers and on the part of parents. Although the situation had existed for all those years, it was considered a problem only by isolated individuals, e.g., parents and other teachers. However, mobilization to action did not occur until recently. A parent decided to mobilize action among parents and set forth to get the contract system changed. Interestingly, the parent was the wife of the superintendent whose child was currently in eighth grade language arts. Mobilization occurred in a simple way--from the wife of the superintendent, and first emerged as an identifiable problem at a school board meeting. In a general discussion of problems and progress at the middle school the superintendent brought up the subject of contracts. He told the board he regarded them as "educationally unsound" and "a lazy way to teach." After these disclosures he attempted to soften his assessment when he realized the media was present at the meeting. No board action was taken on the matter, but the media did quote his remarks on the news the following morning. A few teachers heard the report and in the contagion of spreading what was said misquoted and/or exaggerated the report. The day was characterized by discussion of contracts, fear on the part of teachers who had occasionally used contracts, and joking on the part of those who had just completed contracts.

At the administrative level the superintendent and assistant superintendent met with the principal and later with the three teachers involved. The result was the immediate discontinuation of contracts, anger on the part of the three teachers, discontinuation of contracts by teachers not involved because of fear of reprisals, pleasure on the part of the students who were "sick of those contracts." This provides an example of a problematic situation which required definition, interpretation and bargained solutions and collective definitions. Because of the use of power on the part of the superintendent, little negotiation took place (the teachers stated their case and lost). The media was also a powerful force in this case. It served as the communication link between teachers and school board and administrators. The pattern which emerged from this example points out that under certain conditions the superintendent can make unilateral decisions which affect every level of the system, but which are poorly understood by participants because of limited knowledge (a radio report) and poor communication within the system. Poor communication networks led to further problems--angry teachers, fearful teachers, children who experienced a change in substantive learning program mid-year.

In the contracted example, historical analysis shows that teachers were required to use the contract system when the school opened six years previously. In fact, an "expert" was called on from a university for inservice training. The teachers involved over this period of time operated under the assumption that this was the expected and required way of teaching eighth grade language art. It is interesting that the three teachers were either unaware of growing dissatisfaction with the program or ignored it in favor of the simplicity of repeating the same lessons yearly. Although the teachers were subordinate in the negotiation of change due to the imbalance of power, some degree of power was maintained to the extent that future actions of the teacher were in effect little different from their actions prior to the encounter with administrators. Instead of offering contracts to students for the remainder of the year, the assignments from the contracts were presented as in-class lessons and assignments. Thus, the teachers continued to have little preparation for classes and to the students' delight, there was no more homework.

Stages of development: Cooley Corners middle school contracts.

1) Problem identification came about as the result of a person who exerted enough power on the superintendent (his wife) to mobilize him to action, i.e., speaking out negatively against the contract system in a public school board session. Although other individuals, primarily other teachers and parents, had considered the conditions under which eighth grade language arts had been taught as problematic, no action had been taken. The team of teachers (3) had formed a coalition which made it very difficult for any other teachers to penetrate. One language arts teacher who taught in the team briefly, was critical of their methods and was snubbed and criticized by them. As a result she asked to be transferred to the seventh grade, thus the triumvirate did not have to change. An important factor in the resistance to seek action in this situation was linked to the weakness of the first

principal in the school. He became known as a poor leader who could be manipulated by his teachers. Undesirous of conflict the principal allowed status quo situations such as the contract system to continue, regardless of their ineffectiveness. When he was replaced, the new principal was very controlling, rigid and forceful in his leadership. This allowed for an atmosphere conducive to change, i.e., he did not want conditions in the school to appear lax, he wanted to make clear to teachers and administrators that he was in charge, and he was not concerned about winning or losing friendships among the teachers.

The long term problem of student contracts, therefore, came to be regarded as a problem which required action when persons of sufficient power made public statements defining the problem, under conditions which were conducive to change within the organizational structure of the school.

2) Legitimation of the problem occurred when public recognition came about through media coverage of the superintendent's remarks. Parents who had not voiced an opinion in the past, called the administration to give support to the superintendent's position. Many of these were influential parents whose children were good students which gave legitimacy to the definition of the situation as problematic. The other teachers provided further legitimacy to the problem by quickly changing their own methods to avoid any use of contracts. This deference to the power of the administration rather than attempting to voice support for a contract system, showed the implicit way teachers were controlled, as well as their attempt to separate themselves from the three teachers under fire.

3) Mobilization of action developed when the administration and principal formed a coalition to deal with the three teachers. The teachers attempted to defend their position by using the earlier requirement to use contracts as a way of deferring the problem to the administration and as a way of maintaining the use of contracts. The power differential between the three teachers and the administration and principal, however, was sufficient to limit negotiation and lead to the issuance of an ultimatum.

4) Formulation of an official plan was reached when the teachers were told they would no longer use contracts in their classrooms. Because the plan was issued an administrative ultimatum, alternatives were not well thought out nor considered in depth. Formulating a plan to deal with the nonuse of contracts was required of the teachers. Public demands were met--contracts were no longer used at the middle school, but because those who helped legitimate the problem did not question the alternatives, none were formulated. This partial solution to the problem had hidden consequences which did not appear until a later time.

5) Official plan implementation occurred immediately, i.e., students were stopped part way through their current contracts and given new sets of in-class assignments. However, the teachers in their anger toward the situation, developed strategies for using the contracts without calling them contracts. The old assignments were redistributed and graded differently but were basically reorganizations of the old system.

Dimensions of problem resolution: Cooley Corners middle school student contracts. The dimensions of this problem are depicted in Figure 4.

From the thousands of pages of data generated from this study we could have chosen numerous case study problems for further exemplification and amplification in this section. However, the brevity of this report and the time consuming nature of further analysis within the limitations of the grant period prohibit such detailed presentation. However, the important point has been made, i.e., problems do fall into specified categories and can be analyzed and compared on common dimensions. These are important ways of breaking down the analytic process of studying problems in school systems, regardless of how many empirical examples are provided.

In the preceding sections we have shown how problems can be categorized, dimensionalized and compared from empirically grounded situations. Although this is important as a way of analytically breaking down the problem process, it does not describe nor explain the nature of this process as it occurs in the organizational structure of the school system. In the next section we will begin to explore the nature of the multiplicity of overlapping, simultaneous events which were defined as problems in the two school systems.

Problems as Simultaneous Overlapping Events

Problems occurred on a day-to-day basis within levels and between levels, recurred over periods of time and extended over periods of time. There were problems about which some levels of the school system were unaware and others in which all personnel were involved. The identity of individual actors, the specific dialogue which took place and the actual negotiation exchanges which took place varied but overall patterns did emerge which illustrated the characteristic elements of school system problems.

School system problems could be placed under two major categories--as single independent events occurring simultaneously or as overlapping linked events occurring either simultaneously or sequentially. Each of these categories will be elaborated, represented diagrammatically, and illustrated using school system problems.

1) Single independent events occurring simultaneously refers to those problems which occur on a day-to-day basis at different levels of the school system or within different schools at any level. These problems tend to be self-contained within that level or school unit and because they are single events do not extend in magnitude, i.e., people at other levels and in other schools do not know about them. Figure 5 shows a) how problems can occur within different problem categories as independent events at different organizational levels and b) how they can occur in the same problem category as independent events with a level but at different sites. The first set of examples shows two problem categories--"Facility Maintenance: Vandalism" and "Transportation: Bus routes." This refers to two situations which occurred on the same day at an elementary school and

Figure 4

PROBLEM DIMENSIONS

Situational context: Cooley Corners middle school

Issue: Student contracts

Source: External-Internal

Emergence: Unanticiapted

Magnitude: All levels

Duration: Short-term

Resolution: Bureaucratic

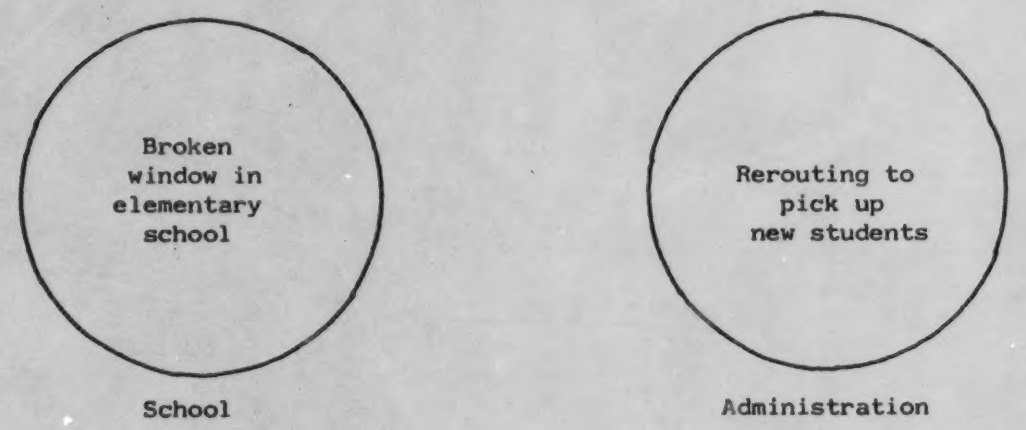
Intensity: High

Negotiation: Ultimatum

Figure 5

SINGLE INDEPENDENT EVENTS OCCURRING SIMULTANEOUSLY

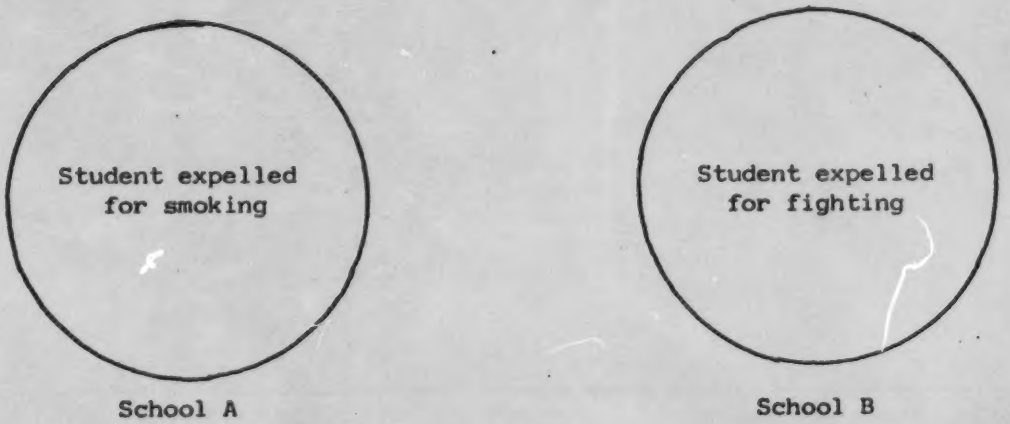
Different Problem Category--Independent Events



Two Level

Same Problem Category--Independent Events

Discipline: Expulsion



Single Level--Two Sites

at the administration office. A broken window in an elementary school was a problem resolved by the principal and custodian. It required no further discussion outside that level. At the administrative level, several families who moved into a particular area of town required that the director of transportation plan a new bus route to include the children in these families. The bus driver was notified and no further discussion was necessary.

If the total range of single independent events which occurred simultaneously in the school system were depicted, there would be an infinite number of circular representations of problems possible. This depiction is also limited by the number of problems the two researchers could note in any given day.

The second set of examples shows a single problem category--"Discipline-Expulsion" which occurred simultaneously at two schools. In the first school a student was expelled for smoking while in the second school a student was expelled for fighting. The problems were not linked, although the occurrence of simultaneous events within the same category was common given that problems in elementary schools, for example, were similar in nature.

Figure 6 shows how single independent events occurring simultaneously looked over time. In the example shown there is a single problem category, "Facility Maintenance" which occurred in two different schools and recurred at a later point, once again as simultaneously single independent events. In the first school the plumbing stopped up at the same time that the second school had a furnace breakdown, while at a later point the first school had a water leak in its basement at the same time that the second school had a broken window in a classroom.

As was true of the first examples, an infinite number of problems of this type occurred at any point in time. The dimension of time, however, shows how comparisons were possible by problem category, levels and sites. As the multiplicity of single events increased in frequency and dimension, problems became overlapping in nature. Although we have isolated events for analytic purposes, the nature of problems in the school systems was complex.

2) Overlapping linked events occurring simultaneously or sequentially. To illustrate their complexity, Figures 7 and 8 show problems as overlapping linked events occurring simultaneously.

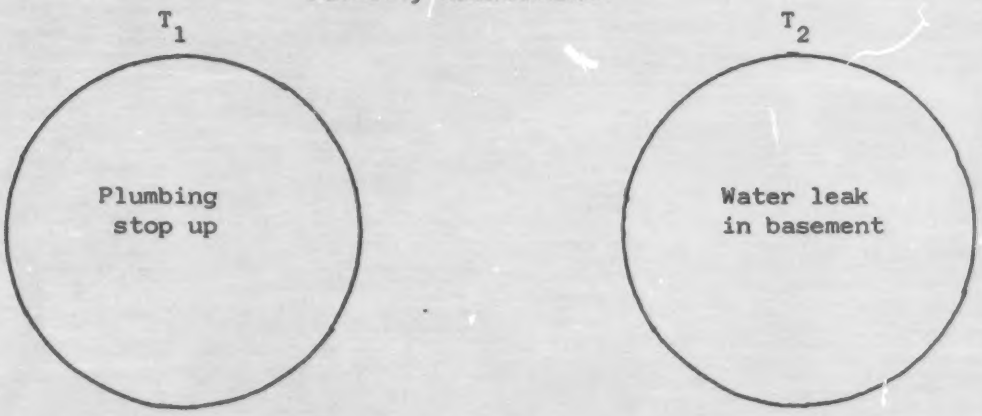
Figure 7 shows problems as concentrically related. This means that a problem may have been nested within a set of other problems, with each concentric "nest" being of greater magnitude than the next. The example depicted began as a student discipline case, a teacher sent a student to the office for excessive class tardies. The principal (junior high level) did not back the teacher, did not discipline the student and sent him back to class. The second stage is reflective of a typical, repeated problem of this particular principal. A frequent complaint of the teachers was that the principal was a poor disciplinarian. Each time a student was sent to the office it had

Figure 6

SINGLE INDEPENDENT EVENTS OCCURRING SIMULTANEOUSLY OVER TIME

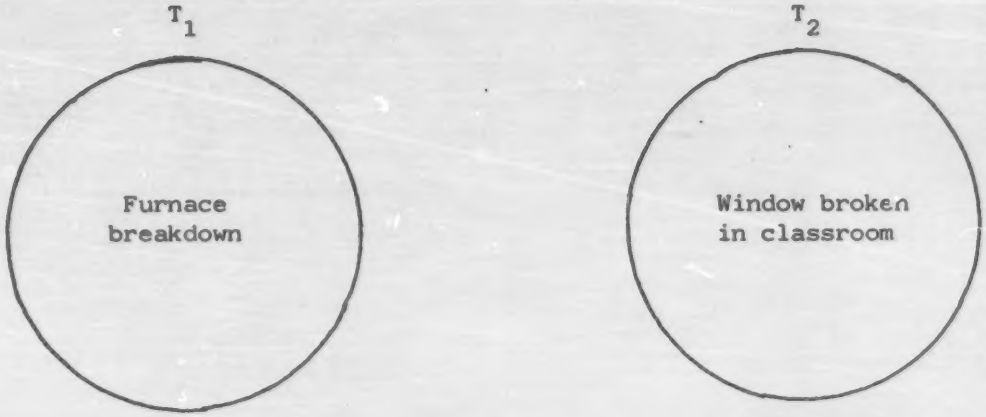
Same Problem Category--Independent Events--Two Time Periods

Facility Maintenance



School A

Single Level: Two Sites

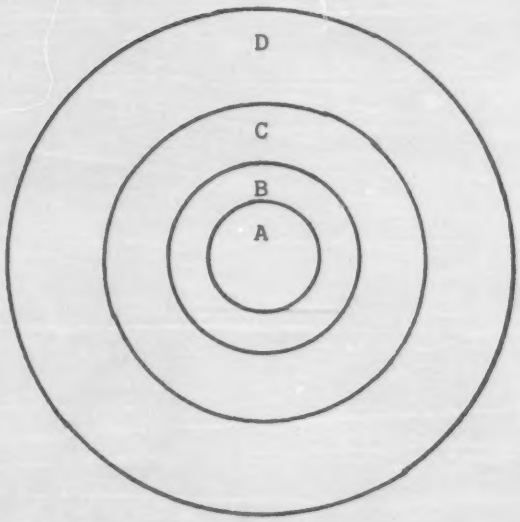


School B

Figure 7

OVERLAPPING LINKED EVENTS OCCURRING SIMULTANEOUSLY

Concentrically Related



Overlapping Problem Categories

A - Discipline: Students sent to office for excessive class tardies.

B - Personnel Relationships Between Levels: Principal does not back teacher, sends student back to class.

C - Personnel: Low morale among teachers and dissatisfaction toward principal.

D - Personnel Relationships Between Levels: Administration evaluation of principal (no action taken).

the "ripple effect" of reinforcing teachers' attitudes that the principal was weak. The third problem, which encompassed the other two, was a pervasive dissatisfaction among the teachers and generally low morale because of the principal's weakness in discipline matters. It served the purpose of joining the teachers more cohesively as a group but also perpetuated a negative attitude in the school. The final problem depicted in the diagram represents a broader acknowledgement by the administration that the principal was a weak leader, that they knew he could not handle discipline and that a solution was needed.

This type of event was interesting because it represented a problem locked in the problem identification stage. The principal's weakness had been known at all levels for years. The former superintendent in Meadmont was a long time friend and would not hire him, while the new superintendent viewed him a problem of the former superintendent's creation. The teachers' level of dissatisfaction came from many years of frustration, while the principal continued to reaffirm their view of him. In this case, sufficient mobilization to action eventually occurred, however. An internal evaluation committee recommended that an assistant be hired and an outside accreditation team suggested the system hire an assistant who would be in charge of discipline. The internal-external legitimation of the problem brought about change.

The second figure (Figure 8) shows overlapping linked events occurring simultaneously as tangentially related. This represents a core problem which was only loosely connected but interrelated to other peripheral problems. In the example given, the core problem was a teacher who became ill. Whenever any teacher became ill, they were likely to cause some of the other linked problems to occur, but when many teachers became ill simultaneously, the problems increased in intensity and sometimes in magnitude. Related problems were the general shortage of substitute teachers available to the system, the state's requirements for who could substitute teach limited choices, the difficulty of the principal or administrator to locate substitute teachers on the day they were needed (some would not answer their phone, or were committed to another school for that day), the difficulty of teachers getting their lesson plans to the substitute teacher--especially if they would be gone several days, the increased discipline problems in classrooms where substitute teachers were used, and the resultant loss in learning suffered by the students when regularly scheduled activities were not undertaken by the substitute teacher and who used different teaching methods than the teacher.

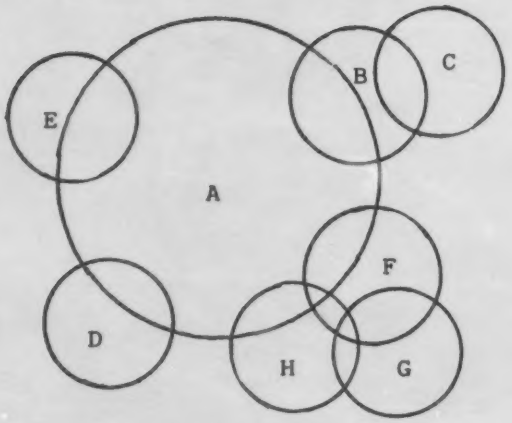
Both concentrically related and tangentially related events occurred at all levels and at all sites over time in both school systems. This could be shown in the same way that single events were compared, e.g., by problem categories by level, site and time sequence but would not add anything meaningful beyond the example presented.

The last category, shown in Figure 9, illustrates overlapping linked events occurring sequentially over unestimable amounts of time. These problems, as compared to those which occurred simultaneously, were loosely connected and interrelated as a series of events

Figure 8

OVERLAPPING LINKED EVENTS OCCURRING SIMULTANEOUSLY

Tangentially Related



Overlapping Problem Categories

A - Personnel: Teacher takes sick leave.

B - Personnel: Shortage of substitute teachers.

C - Personnel: Seasonal increase in illnesses increases shortage of substitute teachers.

D - Communication: Difficulty in locating substitute teachers on the day needed.

E - Communication: Difficulty in getting lesson plans to substitute.

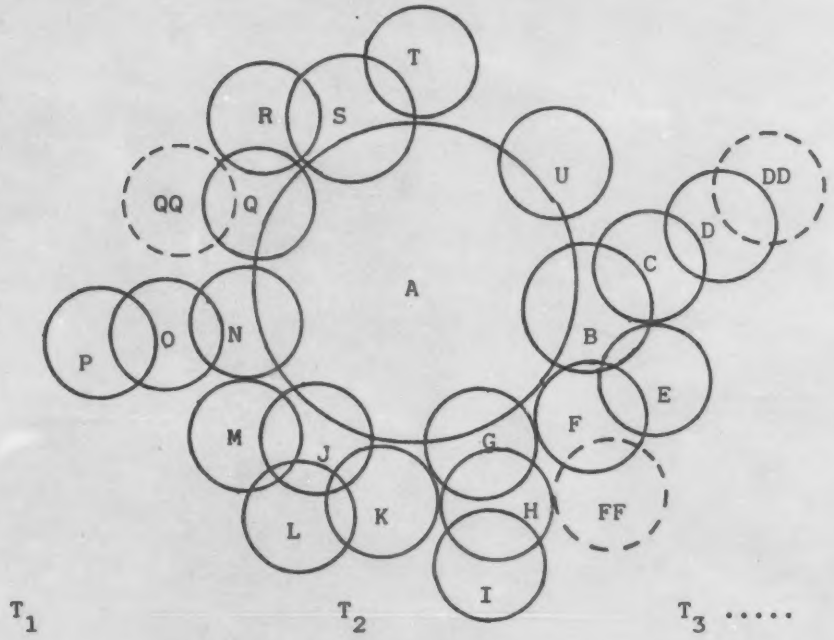
F - Discipline: Absence of regular teacher causes an increase in disruptive behavior.

G - Instruction: Substitute's teaching methods inconsistent with teacher's.

H - Curriculum: Student performance affected by interruption in planned learning activity.

Figure 9

OVERLAPPING LINKED EVENTS OCCURRING SEQUENTIALLY



Overlapping Problem Categories

A - Curriculum: Special education program implementation.
B - Personnel: Teacher's inability to cope with special education classroom.
C - Personnel: Principal evaluation of teacher.
D - Personnel Relationships Between Levels: Principal has conference with teachers.
DD- Personnel: Teacher fired.
E - Instruction: Poor in-service training for teachers.
F - Personnel: Health--high rate of burnout among special ed. teachers.
FF- Personnel: Teacher quits.
G - Discipline: Students' disruptive behavior excessive.
H - Discipline: Students put in detention.
I - Discipline: Students expelled.
J - Personnel Relationships: Negative attitude toward special ed. teachers.
K - Personnel Relationships Between Levels: Principal has low regard for special ed.
L - Personnel Relationships Between Levels: Principal has low regard for director.
M - Personnel Relationships Within Levels: Other teachers have negative regard for special ed.
N - Buildings: Student enrollments high.
O - Buildings: Overcrowding in classrooms.
P - Personnel: Hiring of aides to reduce teacher load.
Q - Governmental Agencies: Requirements difficult to meet.
QQ- Governmental Agencies: Change or cease funding.
R - Governmental Agencies: Inadequate funding.
S - Curriculum: Lack of materials.
T - Instruction: Teaching methods affected by lack of materials.
U - Communication: Misunderstanding at all levels of program.

over time. In the example of teacher illness, the illness set off simultaneously, a set of interrelated problems which clustered around the core problem for the time period of the teacher illness event. Sequentially occurring events represent a more complex series of events, those which were of sufficient and pervasive intensity and magnitude that longer periods of time were required for resolution.

The problem depicted occurred in a Meadmont junior high school over the implementation of a special education program. The teacher of that class began having problems early in the school year coping with the high enrollment and resultant overcrowded conditions, which served to increase the incidence of disruptive behavior. The teacher sent students to the principal's office for punishments, which the principal dealt with by lecturing students, placing them in detention and sometimes expelling them. The principal also had conferences with the teacher after observing and evaluating her classroom situation. Because of the high drop-out, burn-out rate among special education teachers the principal did not want to have to replace the teacher mid-year. Instead he decided, with the director of special education, to do two things--hire an aide and send the teacher to other schools to observe how teachers coped with the same problems. The latter was necessary because of inadequate provision of inservice training within the district. These problems were affected by a general negative attitude of the principal toward special education. Although he was willing to do what he could to solve the problem and help the teacher, his low regard for the program influenced his decisions. It also influenced the other teachers' attitudes toward the classes because the teacher got special attention, an aide, and extra materials not available to them. Communication in general was a problem linked to the other problems because of misunderstanding at all levels, including parents, of the purpose and content of the program.

Time periods are shown as representative of the ongoing nature of sequential problems which grow and proliferate in numerous directions and which vary greatly in their duration. Although the immediate problems in the special education classroom were resolved in a three month time period, when an aide was hired, some of the other problems continued to occur. In the case of the principal's attitude, it was not likely the problem would ever be resolved. To show the continuing sequentiality of this problem, possible areas of overlapping problems are projected, as shown in those circles drawn in dotted lines. For purposes of discussion, three areas are shown. In area DD, we assumed that in future conferences with the teacher that the principal might decide to fire her and hire a new teacher. In area FF, we assumed that the teacher might decide to quit the school system and find a job less problematic. Area QQ represents the possibility that a governmental agency might change their guidelines or cease funding the program altogether.

In this section we have depicted school system problems as overlapping events which occur either independently from other problems or linked to other problems, but which are occurring simultaneously either within or between levels of the school system at any and all points in time. These examples show the analytic process whereby problems were and can be understood.

School Systems as Negotiated Orders

In this section, we want to examine the emergence of the negotiated order perspective and explicate some issues, indicate some problems in its application to school systems, present an extensive example of "formal" negotiation in the school system, draw out some generalizations from our observations in the districts, and focus on differences between the two systems in terms of frequency of negotiation.

The reader will find some repetition and overlap with the previous section. The content may, at times, appear similar but the foci are different. Here we are concerned with the overall organizational form. In the last section we focused upon the analysis of problems. Clearly they are related. If "negotiations" were being conceptually sought as a process, "problems" would seem an obvious arena. Indeed, our theoretical conceptualization and substantive focus increased the likelihood of finding a negotiated order. On the other hand, problems need not lead to negotiations as was demonstrated in the last section. Or because the participants do not define an obstacle as a problem but rather as a misunderstanding or a minor irritant, negotiation could occur without a problem.

The form of analysis in this section will vary from that in the previous one. The analysis of problems developed a typology, the specification of components, and the relationship of formal categories. This section will emphasize a more global, contextual approach which seeks to ground the analysis of the organizational form in the behavior of participants. Both are different and useful ways of studying human behavior which complements one another. It shows how the same data can be organized, analyzed, and used in different but mutually supportive ways.

The State of the Negotiated Order Model

Since the time that the study was originally formulated, Strauss (1978) has published a book which adds some dimensions to the model and responds to some of the criticism. In addition, we have read some other works by organizational scholars that have some similarities and differences with Strauss (e.g. Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978 and Meyer and Associates, 1978) which has enriched yet altered somewhat our perspective in understanding our data.

Strauss' current paradigm for analyzing negotiations include a) the structural context, including the actor's theories of negotiation; b) the negotiation context and its properties; c) the actual interactions themselves including subprocesses of negotiation. By structural context Strauss means the salient structural properties that bear upon and surround the negotiation context. His inclusion here of actor's theories of negotiation may appear misplaced as structure but clearly is of relevance. The negotiation context includes these components--characteristics of negotiators, type of negotiations, relative balance of power, stakes in the negotiation, visibility of negotiations, number and complexity of issues, legitimacy of the issues, options to avoid or discontinue negotiations.

These specifications constitute clear improvements over the earlier formulation. They are also attempts to wrestle with the issues raised by Day and Day (1977) in terms of relationship to the larger structure and the significance of power. The addition of actor's theories of negotiation represents a specific explication of the kind of information and conceptualization an interactionist would normally utilize. Jointly they represent attempts to become more "macro" and take greater account of constraining factors and also to increase awareness of the voluntaristic aspects of human behavior.

In one sense, this is part of a larger trend. A number of organizational scholars have been increasingly concerned about and have emphasized the impact of the environment upon the organization and the manner in which the organization is determined by or dependent upon the environment (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978 and Meyer and Rowan, 1978). At the same time, a number of these scholars and others (Weick, 1969; Pondy, 1978) have focused upon the social construction of reality and the enacted character of environments. There indeed may be a contradiction here (and with the negotiated order model as well) that Benson (1979) has pointed out between an objectivist ecological environment and a subjectivist emergent one. One could also clearly envision greater attention to negotiation across organizational boundaries and impression management within the organization. It remains to be seen, in general, whether scholars can successfully go both ways although it clearly needs to be done.

In order to use the idea of the negotiated order, it is necessary to have at least a rudimentary idea of negotiation. Strauss does not provide us with a definition although he lists a number of related terms, including a bargain, contract, arrange, agreement, reconcile, compact, understanding, adjustment, settle, coordinate. In general we perceive negotiation to involve either situations where there are opposing differences or alternative perspectives and in which there is an exchange which involved more than the simple statement or awareness of those.

Thus when the workers want a union and the boss does not, or the parent wants the child to clean up her room and the child resists, we have opposing differences. When two acquaintances attempt to clarify the meaning of some smoke over there by offering different possibilities or two friends have to decide how to spend some time, we have alternative perspectives. To represent negotiation beyond this means that the exchange go beyond "I want this." "No, you can't have it." We need to have appeals, requests, explanations going back and forth beyond an initial command, interrogation, or declamation.

The definitional problem is small in comparison to some others. How could you determine if you indeed observed a negotiated order? How much negotiation do you have to have to be a negotiated order? It is easy to be left with the impression that every social order is negotiated to some extent, at some time, in some place (Maines, 1977). At that level, the concept might have little utility. Perhaps questions can be raised in terms of comparisons between organizations or between levels as to frequency, intensity, and consequence of negotiation. Care would have to be taken, however, not to lose the

aesthetics of the concept through arid quantification. A crucial question would remain--under what kinds of conditions are negotiations likely to occur.

Another vista on these kinds of issues is to ask what kinds of organizations are likely to be negotiated orders. It is helpful to examine the original studies that led to the development of the concept and to locate them physically, historically, and theoretically. The studies were conducted in the late 1950's. Those institutions were undergoing considerable change and experimentation. In addition, psychiatry had a good deal of ideological ferment and diversity (Strauss et al., 1964; Strauss, 1978:107-122). When one brings together pressures for organizational change, the dynamics of therapeutic communities, the range of ideologies, the multiple professions (semi-professionals and non-professionals, also) involved in treatment, the psychiatrist's commitment to his patient in a private hospital, the adult status of the patients and the involvement of their families, it is not difficult to imagine negotiation. It seems a very fair conclusion that the negotiated order is an apt description of those institutions under those conditions. It may be appropriate for psychiatric hospitals and medical centers in general. We also need to remember that structural-functionalism with its emphasis on consensus and stability was the dominant theory. Interactionism constituted the only viable alternative. It was therefore relatively easy to interpret the data within that framework in the absence of concerns with power and structural networks.

Limits on Schools as Negotiated Orders

Schools and school systems seem to be a different kind of organization. We observed far less negotiation than we anticipated. While negotiation did occur in one district more than the other and differentially at some levels of the systems, there was much more often a loose coupling of intention and action, an inhaling of frustration and exhaling of "making do," a bureaucratic ruling, or the imposition of sanctions. We will discuss the differences between levels and between systems in negotiative activity later. At this point, our reasoning for infrequent negotiation will be outlined.

One obvious difference between schools and hospitals is their operational focus. Despite the large numbers and mass handling of patients in hospitals and the rhetoric about individualization of students in schools, the former do focus on the case and the latter on the classroom. If that is combined with the fact that adults, mentally ill or physically sick, can defend and assert themselves more easily and effectively than children, then we should expect less negotiations in schools than hospitals.

The degree and quality of change in school systems is different now than in the 1950's or 1960's and certainly different than Strauss' hospitals. Fewer major innovations are being developed or instituted. Fewer expansive changes are being made that require new programs or new buildings. Rather what we observe is curtailment, decline, and cutbacks. Instead of curriculum expansion and revision, there is a return to basics and accountability tests. Instead of brand new buildings, there are school closings. School closings do represent

changes and can often entail negotiations, but there is a difference between change under conditions of surplus resources in contrast to deficits. Increasingly changes are being mandated more and induced less from the outside. That also is a difference from the earlier period. The effect of that change is to constrain the options of those inside the system. Again there may be negotiations across the boundaries of the school system but under different conditions and with different consequences.

External limits on negotiations are also due to the declining proportion of the population with children in the schools. That leads to fewer people with a vested interest in the schools, declining support for the schools in general, and exacerbates problems of legitimacy, credibility, and public opinion. System members at all levels constrain themselves, acquiesce, or leave rather than suggest new alternatives or raise what might be a public controversy. Increasingly there are more concerns about creating a positive image and having "good P.R." than in discussing and resolving other problems.

The weight of history and tradition has limited negotiation within the schools. People in the community and in the schools have developed patterns and perceptions about the systems that condition them not to question or offer alternatives. "You can't teach evolution or have sex education in this town"; "They won't be professionally committed to in-service"; "They never have known what it is to try to win and then win--so they don't try." An obvious parallel is that past commitment of resources or the failure to get more when they were available takes its toll in the present. Those decisions reproduce themselves and make it difficult to find new resources or free others for alternative use. Old buildings, a junior high instead of a high school, the wrong site, poor principals, a bad salary schedule, etc., all represent constraints and drags upon the system. Those constraints together with the perception of stability make negotiating seem a relatively useless activity.

The daily life of the school building is characterized by ritual, practicality, segmentation, and superficial intermittent interaction. The day is divided up into periods with teachers and students routinely moving through them without difficulty although frequently with fatigue or boredom. Most teachers do not see many of their colleagues or their superiors other than in a passing through or passing by fashion. Administrators tend to be in their offices or out of the building so they see only a few children, teachers, or parents during a day. Off periods and lunch times tend to be short, hectic, or with chores to do. At the end of the day, most teachers and some building administrators want to go home to escape, relax, fix meals, attend to kids. They are never enthralled about after-school meetings or conferences. Throughout the day, their concern has been to make it through the day--a very practical orientation. Doing that is done most often in isolation from others. What contact there is with other adults is limited in time and in content. These are not the conditions of negotiation. Structurally, there are limited opportunities for negotiation. On the other hand, open classrooms, open schools, team teaching, individualized instruction and an experimental curriculum

would be more conducive to negotiation. In the traditional setting only if things get out of hand or if someone has an unusual request or situation or a collective gathering is called would we expect negotiation.

The fragmented nature of the organization with separate school buildings and offices for the administration isolates and insulates school systems from negotiations. The higher an administrator was in the hierarchy, the less of his time that was spent in the school buildings. Even the directors of various areas, e.g. buildings and grounds, secondary education, spent most of their time in the central office. Awareness of what occurred at the building level was dependent upon verbal accounts, memos, and letters. They assumed that everything was copacetic just as principals assumed education was taking place in the classroom if they heard nothing. The lack of active coordination, surveillance, or opening up the opportunity to receive requests structurally discourages negotiation. At each level, those at the top strive to control or contain problems. "Problem stop-over" meant a loss of face particularly if it was discovered by someone above and not reported from below. The organization discouraged breaking the chain of command so negotiations were limited and problems kept secret because the activities were far away from the one who would be concerned about them.

The previous factor correlates closely with the distribution of power in the system. Those without power, or who preceived they were powerless, clearly restrained themselves. While they might feel powerless as individuals, they could perhaps collectively wield power. In general the teachers were passive, individually and collectively. Most felt the Board, the Superintendent, and the Central Administration were a distant omnipotent THEY. Some would occasionally call sympathetic Board members but only in unusual circumstances because they knew the seriousness of "the offense." Some felt sufficiently strong or believed their building principal sufficiently responsive to negotiate limited agreements. Most were passive, however, even with their principal. Part of that was due to their recognition that the principal too was limited. While principals had more resources, influence, and authority, they often complained about budget rigidity, an unresponsive superior, the lack of congruence between the superintendent's agenda and their concerns, or broader "political realities." However, one interesting difference to be discussed later is that the elementary principals in one district have an organization that "negotiates" their concerns while in the other district they are simply an unorganized aggregate of individuals.

One interesting reversal in the formal distribution of power is that the Central Administration has more operative or functioning power than the Board of Education. Zeigler and Jennings (1974) clearly demonstrated this with a national sample. We have described portions of this situation in one of our districts elsewhere (Hall and Spencer-Hall, 1979 and Spencer-Hall and Hall, 1979). The Board becomes dependent upon the administration for information, advice, and guidance. Structurally, they are induced to trust them because if they cannot trust them, then that reflects upon the Board's judgment. The administration utilizes a professional ideology to define issues as educational, technical, and nonnegotiable. The Board has a tendency to defer

to the profession, denotatively and connotatively, of expertise. The Board then accepts, literally and figuratively, the agenda constructed by the Administration.

Perhaps more than ideology or expertise, the problem of formal power is due to the avocational part-time involvement by Board member versus the vocational full-time commitment of the Administrator. To be an effective Board member requires a great deal of time and effort to pursue concerns or ferret out problems. Those Board members who try discover their other role obligations make their claims. If that call is from a boss or a business, then the schools' business will have to wait. In addition, most Board members lack the free time, the interest, or the skills to do the political work necessary to create majority coalitions to counter their peers or the Administration. Most Board members limit their involvement and go from meeting to meeting. That clearly means they limit the challenges to the Administration and therefore the consequent negotiations. The net effect was a large gap between intentions and actions, between decision and implementation.

Another factor which limited negotiations in the two school systems was the focus of organizational attention and commitments. Both districts were involved continuously and heavily in plans for building programs and campaigns to pass bond proposals throughout our study (Hall, in process). Internally, the issues were defined as non-negotiable and the requirement of 100% collective effort. Other issues were given stop-gap solutions, ignored, tabled, or held back. Since the bond passages were to be solutions to many problems, participants simply waited and waited to see if either problem would be solved or if there would be resources for their problem. More negotiations would have occurred if one issue had not dominated the systems. While it did give rise to some it constrained the opportunities, resources, and interests in others. All other things being equal, negotiations would be more frequent in organizations with low to moderate issue attentiveness.

One tentative conclusion we have reached is that the school districts we observed could be described as loosely-coupled systems (Weick, 1976). While we believe that the psychiatric hospitals were negotiated orders and school systems loosely coupled, it is not intrinsic that the metaphors be contradictory. There could be a tightly-coupled system with much negotiation because of conflicts, norms and contingencies. A loosely-coupled system could be coupled with a negotiated order because the organization lacked coordinating structures and functioning rules so the day-to-day activities required the working out of agreements. Or one could have a loosely-coupled system with relatively low degrees of negotiation because of lack of contact, coordination and commitment so there would be a great deal of discretion, overlooking, and avoidance (Meyer and Rowan, 1978). As is apparent from our discussion so far, the last possibility seems more appropriate. More systematic examination, however, awaits another time.

The Development of Salary Schedules

One useful way to compare the organizational processes of the two districts is to examine and analyze how the salary schedule for the following year was determined. Although the situations described are a year apart, observations, discussions, and interviews indicate that they are representative of our understanding of the systems. While the external constraints are somewhat different because of varying rates of inflation, state government appropriations, and Presidential wage guidelines, the basic processes are not affected.

It is important to note that the state in question does not legally allow collective bargaining between public employees and their respective employers. Attempts have been made in each of the past three or four years to pass such legislation. However, despite close votes and compromises about coverage and forms of mediation-arbitration, the bills have been defeated. Each year an illegal strike (job action) by groups of public employees occurs while the legislature is debating the issue. The state school board association and state school administrators association have lobbied strongly against collective bargaining for teachers.

What exists in both districts is a "meet and confer" or salary discussion policy which, loosely disguised, are negotiations. In fact, at various times, the participants will call them negotiations and then smile or wink or use the legal euphemism. Teachers are more prone to do this than administrators. In each district there is a committee of the local teachers' organization which has the responsibility of polling the staff, finding out their needs and desires, and presenting to the administration their version of the next year's salary schedule. The administration meanwhile has examined its projected budget and is in the process of preparing a counter-proposal. After a joint meeting or two, the administration presents a proposal to the teachers' committee which is taken back to a total membership meeting. A vote is taken to accept or reject. If accepted, the administration then presents the proposal to the Board of Education for approval.

In Cooley Corners, the process was observed during the winter and early spring of 1979. The local teachers' committee formally consisted of two members from each of the secondary buildings and one from each of the elementary units and special education center. Several of the elementary schools were only sporadically represented. Harry Long, the chair of the committee was a high school teacher who has had some college teaching experience while pursuing a doctorate. He discontinued that education for family and financial reasons. His wife is also a teacher and they have several children. Mr. Long joined the local country club that summer and also is slated to be the president of the local teachers' group for the year 1980-1981. He is highly respected by the administration, his peers, the students, and parents. He is a quiet, soft spoken but articulate person.

Conversations with him and Ed Taves, the other high school representative, who is known for his iconoclasm, indicated that they believed they would be given what the administration wanted, independent of the teachers' requests, so that they were simply going through the motions. Taves told me that the only reason he agreed to serve on the

committee was because Long was a friend and had asked him to stay. Taves' body language during all of the meetings around the tables was one of distance.

The point was made early in the proceedings that the administration wanted an agreement prior to presentation to the Board of Education because they wanted a united front. They did not want administration and teachers arguing in public--with the media present. I was informed that the teachers had been dissatisfied with a proposal by an earlier administration and had attempted to air that with the Board. The former superintendent verbally demolished the head of the teachers' committee that night. No one wanted a repetition of that humiliation. In general, the current teachers' committee and organization viewed this administration as supportive and positive. They did nothing to cross the superintendent and played a very humble, almost obsequious role.

The rest of the committee consisted of women except for one man. About half of the women were young, professionally oriented and pursuing additional education. The other women were middle aged, married, with tenure in the district. The remaining man was a physical education teacher who had taught in the district for many years. The most vocal and forceful members of the committee were the younger women who were pushing for a salary schedule that would give additional rewards and incentives to those who were in the midst of pursuing additional education. This would also give some additional increases as a result to those career teachers who had already achieved the additional education. It would sacrifice, penalize or minimize the salary levels and increases for beginning teachers and those who had many years in the system but had not achieved nor were pursuing a master's degree. The other members of the committee and the chair, in general, were passively supportive of the younger teachers' proposal but were aware that the majority of the teachers would not benefit from this. Since they were not going to make a proposal that would force the administration to ask the Board to ask the community to agree to a tax levy increase, they created severe constraints upon themselves. They ultimately went to the administration with a proposal that asked first for an increase in the base, some additional increases across educational accomplishments, and an additional category for those between the master's and the specialist degree, in that order of priority because they knew how the administration would respond.

The chair instructed the members of the committee that when they met he was to do all the talking so that the administration could not find or create any differences within them. They met with the superintendent and his two assistants at the central office. The purpose of the meeting was to hear what the teachers wanted and to ask questions, clear up ambiguities, and discuss general directions.

At the time that these discussions occur, there is a great deal of uncertainty confronting the administration--which, to some extent, they find useful in their dealings. Approximately half of their money comes from the state legislature which has not determined its collective wisdom by the end of winter and the beginning of spring. In fact, the Governor, the Senate, and the House may have three different figures in mind for public elementary and secondary schools. Thus it

may be summer before a final figure is known. In addition, the administration also will not know until July what the assessed valuation of the property in the district will be so that they can estimate how much money, given a certain levy, will be produced as revenue for the schools.

Additionally, the administration places its highest priority on attracting new teachers to the district. Their view is that the older ones are already committed to teaching and have too much already invested to quit or that they are not as good as they should be and do not merit additional rewards for educational achievement. The administration therefore put its largest dollar amounts on increasing the base. Their initial reaction will be to frustrate the younger teachers on the committee.

Several important facts emerge in the course of several meetings of the two committees and in conversations that the administration had with one of the researchers. When the original proposal was made for an additional column between the master's degree and master's plus 30 graduate hours, the administration formally rejected it and one of the assistant superintendents harshly opposed it arguing a long traditional line in the district. Additional columns cost too much money and teachers did not need education beyond a master's degree anyway. At this point the superintendent sided with him. Privately, the other assistant superintendent indicated that he was concerned about the number of people stuck on earlier columns who were at best simply taking courses that were not graduate courses or were not enrolled in a graduate degree program. He could, however, envision a trade-off which would change columns beyond the B.A. but which were B.A.+ graduate hours for M.A.+ graduate hours. He would bide his time. Also the younger women on the committee were not satisfied at one point that the chairman had brought out sufficiently the strength of their desire for the addition of that column. So one of them near the end of a meeting with the administration interjected that point and the others backed her up as did the chairman. However, the net outcome of the first round of discussions and the proposal that the Board initially approved was simply an increase in the base and therefore an across the board increase.

What is interesting is that the administration-recommended increase in the base was much larger than what the teachers had requested. The administration thus creates in its own mind the idea that the teachers are inept negotiators and makes itself look like "Big Daddy" to the teachers collectively. One reason for this is that the administration has a greater amount of information and is also aware of the essential teacher passivity. And, in general, the chair of the committee did defer to the administration. The meetings were on the administration's turf and conducted with seating that gave the superintendent his usual dominance. At the end of these discussions, it did become public that the State Government might increase the amount of money to go to public schools. The superintendent told the committee, without prompting, that he would consider the additional column in addition to adding more to the base, if the increase occurred in the magnitude being discussed at the capital.

Indeed during the summer, that money did become available. Discussions within the administration led to the older assistant superintendent losing out to the newer and younger one. The additional column added gives additional incentives to those pursuing post-master's work but, more importantly, from the perspective of the newer, younger assistant superintendent, those below the master's level will be rewarded only if they take graduate hours and work toward a master's degree. In his mind, he has created conditions for improving the professional orientation of the teaching staff. Only a few teachers in this district go beyond the master's and in terms of costs, it was small. However many are still between a bachelor's and a master's and the administration believes it is better able to control the movement of those people. Overall, the most important aspect of all of this is that the administration knew it could and did offer the teachers more than they requested--which is a far cry from what one normally thinks of as negotiations.

In Meadmont, the process was observed during the winter and spring of 1980. Several points are important and prefatory to this discussion. First, the superintendent was in his second full "negotiation" on salary. He recognized that when he entered the district that salaries were low relative to other districts. He made a public commitment to help career teachers as well as increase the base to attract new ones. That commitment to career teachers meant primarily reducing the steps one had to go through to reach the top of various scales. Between each step, however, was a fixed index or percent so that, hypothetically, a person who had a masters and four years of experience could be indexed at 1.30; then the next year they would be indexed at 1.32. The previous superintendent had made a major tenet of his salary recommendation never to alter the index because of its spiraling effect. He was quoted as saying it would bankrupt the system. The current assistant superintendent was a product of the old superintendent and totally committed to that way of thinking. Numerous Board members commented on how conservative he was. The assistant superintendent also had support from, at least, one old Board member. The new superintendent was, at least, privately more flexible and recognized some changes in indexing would have to occur. Other Board members, however, were deeply concerned about the low level of salaries, in general, and the need to improve them for the career teacher--some way.

Secondly, after the Board passed its salary schedule for 1979, two members from the salary committee asked to meet with the Board. They presented their case for the need for higher salaries and more rewards for the career teacher. There was an acrimonious exchange between one Board member and the two teachers. A number of generally critical comments were made about them after they left and about how unrepresentative they were of the total staff. Those two individuals became charter members, officers, and spokespersons of a rival teachers organization over the summer of 1979 and into the school year 1979-80. They, however, also retained their offices within the local teachers' group and more significantly the co-chairs of the salary discussion committee. They were both in the same department at a secondary school and were considered professional and good teachers by all--until they became involved in rival teacher politics. They were militant in their defense of "their profession" but marvelously calculating in building support and "being positive." They refused to acknowledge any contradiction between their positions in the two organizations.

Also the additional money from the state legislature over the summer was given as a lump sum bonus of $500 to each staff member. That was done without consultation. However, when the time came for discussions of the 1980-81 salary, the administration regarded that bonus as being part of the new base. The teachers' salary committee and organization believed that the salary discussions began with the original base. They were never informed of this difference until after they received the administration proposal.

The salary committee is appointed by the Executive Committee of the local recognized teachers' organization and has about a dozen members. Not every school or unit necessarily has a representative. Some also remain on it for several years to provide continuity in positions of responsibility and experience. At the beginning of the year, since committees were appointed before the rival teachers' organization surfaced, the "negotiation committee" appeared to be dominated by members of the rival group. After an attempt to change the by-laws to exclude members of "competitive" teachers' groups from offices in the local organization failed and after a preliminary meeting between the president of the local organization, one of the committee co-chairs and the superintendent, the president got the Executive Committee to expand the membership of a number of the organization's committees but specifically the salary committee's membership was increased by about 40%. Those added were known to be stalwart supporters of the local organization. So while the co-chairs and several others were members or fellow travelers of the rival group, the majority represented the older group. We have reason to believe, although no direct confirmation, that the additions to the committee were done with the prior knowledge, if not the encouragement and suggestion of the administration and some of the Board. Our observations of the committee's meetings did not reveal any differences in the approaches of the committee members nor any animosity between them. In fact, since they were all experienced teachers they had a common goal in rewarding themselves. They were less interested in increasing the base, which was, as in Cooley Corners, the primary interest of the administration.

The committee had sent out a survey to all the staff asking them to, among other things, rank salary increase priorities. The one-third of the teachers who responded, disproportionately the more experienced teachers, ranked increased index differentials, more money for career teachers, far above an increase in the salary base. The proposal that was submitted to the administration from the teachers called for a $500 increase in the base, indices of .04 instead of .02 and the elimination of two steps at the top of each education/degree column. This proposal was the unanimous choice of the committee. They did have some discussion about .03 indices but decided to go with .04 because they figured the administration would resist but might conceivably agree to .03 as a compromise.

One process which differentiates Meadmont from Cooley Corners is that the administration takes its proposal to the Board at a study session before their final meeting with the teachers' committee. The administration presented the Board with three different proposals raising the base $500, $600, and $700 above the bonus-improved base of 1979-80. In addition, they suggested the elimination of several more

steps than the teachers' committee suggested. And finally they began to increase the indices to .03 after six years on the bachelor scale and after nine on the master's.

The superintendent reiterated his position about helping the career teacher by eliminating steps and also increasing the indices. He also made a pitch that they could afford the largest base increase since the legislature and the governor were publicly committed to large increases for public schools. A great deal of delight was taken in recognizing that the teachers would get more money from the administration proposal than from what the teachers' negotiation committee had requested. After getting Board approval, the superintendent privately breathed a sigh of relief to one of the researchers and noted what an obstacle he had overcome by getting the assistant superintendent to be supportive of increased indices and having the Board approve it. It had apparently taken a lot of effort on his part. He is extremely conscious of the drag of tradition and the need to go slow because of the conservatism of many inside the system, some on the Board, and the presumed majority of influentials in the community. The spectre of the old superintendent hangs heavy.

The administration salary schedule for the next year was then sent to all the staff for their information. The teachers' organization had already scheduled a membership meeting to hear the committee and vote on the administration proposal. The entire staff did not see a copy of the salary committee's proposal although it was posted in each teachers' lounge. We were told that they did not have the resources to make a copy for each teacher, a statement we find hard to believe. Many had not seen it or studied it.

The general meeting was attended by over 160 staff members, about fifteen of whom were administrators. As there was a School Board election coming, it was also a candidate's meeting so the president of the Board and a non-incumbent were also there. The meeting, in short time, got to the major concern. The administration-proposed schedule became the forum of discussion. While the committee chair went through the procedure, at no time was the content of their request made the subject of discussion nor revealed to the members. Several teachers noted an inconsistency in the administration-proposed schedule that would penalize about 20 teachers relative to the other staff. Since this teacher claimed to have been penalized under the last salary schedule change, she objected to it occurring again. The teacher stated that she had pointed it out to the central administration but, while being sympathetic, they did not see any recourse nor any strong reason to change the proposal at that late date. A great deal of discussion ensued. Much of it involved the president of the Board trying to defend the administration and at the same time indicate her support (as well as that of the superintendent and the rest of the Board) for improved salaries. She ended up defending a proposal that she supposedly had not seen and acted upon. One other Board member was in the back of the meeting telling the researcher that the Board president should keep quiet. But to no avail. A member of the salary committee (and not a member of the rival teachers' group) moved that the proposal be rejected and sent back to the administration for reconsideration of those places where people are unfairly penalized. That motion passed by a better than two-thirds proportion.

As the situation is reconstructed for us by some of the participants, the superintendent was furious. Both he and the assistant superintendent believed it would be a loss of face to change the schedule then. Numerous phone calls between the Board president and another member over a period of days got the superintendent to change his position. The assistant superintendent said he will change it only if "the boss" says so. Meanwhile the superintendent had let the teachers' group know indirectly that they should set up a meeting with him to inform him of the decision and what they want. That required, in addition to meeting with the superintendent, a meeting of the committee. The superintendent did not encourage the teachers' representatives who met with him. However, at the same time he was meeting with them, he had told his assistant to calculate the cost of the changes. A revised schedule was then sent out to all staff which eliminated the inconsistency. Along with that material was also sent the copy of the original teacher request to highlight the differences and the administration beneficence.

In the middle of the next month, the rival group held a candidate's meeting and the president of the Board, as a candidate, attended. Since the group itself is officially unrecognized, her attendance constituted an important step in legitimation. But, in addition, she was told by one after another of the more than 20 people there that the decision by the administration (and the Board) to revise the salary schedule made them feel important, alive, and proud to be a member of that district.

The superintendent in discussing the situation with the researcher removed all emotion from his response and described it in very procedural terms. He pointed out that they would have done those things next year anyway--which they would have, according to their discussions in the study session--and that they did not cost much besides. But it seems clear that without the Board pressure those changes would not have occurred. On the other hand, if the superintendent had not been so concerned about bringing his assistant superintendent and one Board member along relatively slowly, he could have basked in showing the teachers' committee to have been poor bargainers. As it now stands, the teachers believe they have won a victory and some in the administration have lost face. The rival teachers' group tripled in size during the year and has plans to achieve majority in the next year. The administration and the Board have just lost a third try to pass some school bonds so the lines between the administration and the teachers might harden.

Analyzing the Salary Negotiations

The structural context surrounding these negotiations for both districts is fairly similar. The rate of inflation, while showing a greater increase for 1979-80 than 1978-79, hurt both districts as a whole as well as their individual members. Teachers, on the other hand, remain with generally low salaries and like most other workers with increases falling behind the rise in the cost of living. Districts, on their own, would have few resources to alter that. Much of their budget is inflexible in the sense of being committed to existing obligations.

The districts then become dependent upon the state legislature to provide allocations to the local districts depending upon certain formulas. They are increasingly dependent because of the resistance of local taxpayers to levy increases. Indeed recent state legislation has limited the flexibility of school districts to raise levies without voter approval. But, at the same time, state legislatures are under increasing pressure to limit the growth of state expenditures. Happily, for school districts, the legislature and the Governor have recognized the need for additional funding for public education.

The lack of collective bargaining legislation for public employees means that the teachers' options are severely limited. They can either "meet and confer" or do nothing. Ideas of job actions, hostile confrontations, failures to agree are almost unthinkable within these districts. The conservatism of the communities and the traditions of the district are also factors in limiting the options.

The properties of the negotiation context can be illustrated as follows:

1) The number of negotiators, their relative experience in negotiating, and whom they represent.

Number in this circumstance does not appear crucial, except that the teachers' group is larger and requires a series of meetings to reach agreement. When they are all present, as in Cooley Corners, they could appear to be a mass to the administration or the Board. In Meadmont, they never meet with the administration as a totality, only representatives go so that numbers are balanced.

Experience is a differentiating factor. All of the administrators have been through this process numerous times. They know how it is done; where the information is; what teachers are likely to ask; and what the set of arguments is that can be used to counter the teachers' positions. The teachers, while they may be veterans in the district, have much more limited experience in negotiating. While there is overlap on their committees from year to year, the committee is basically a new group each year. Continuity does not go beyond two years for almost all of the members. New members tend to fall into line and adopt old positions and standard procedures. It seems clear that an advantage lies with the administration here.

Representation has some interesting consequences. The administrations claim to be representing the district, the Board, and themselves at various times depending upon the argument they want to make. The teachers are supposed to represent all of the teachers in the district yet because of who they are, i.e. experienced teachers, they represent some more than others. Those "others," the younger teachers are less likely to come to meetings or take an interest in the organization. What happens is that they get "represented" by the administration.

2) The patterning of the negotiations--e.g. one-shot, repeated, linked.

These are negotiations that are repeated each year. They have a history of processes, results, and norms which affect them.

In addition, during any year they are sequential in the sense that meetings within groups and between groups build upon and respond to what has preceded them. The continuity of members also provides a sequencing across years so that an admministrator can have a five-year plan or the teachers can continue pressing for a particular change. The sequencing, intermittent as it is, allows the parties to muster arguments and counter-arguments and gather and evaluate information.

3) The relative balance of power between the parties.

Clearly, the administration has the greater amount of power. It, however, manifests itself in a variety of ways. First, the teacher must meet after hours to discuss their concerns and proposals while the administrators can meet at anytime during working hours. Second, meetings between them are always held on administration territory, at their timing, and with them in charge. Third, teachers in general have been afraid to get angry, mildly disagree, or even sneeze in front of the superintendent. If negotiations were conducted by an assistant superintendent, they might be willing to challenge more but they defer strongly to the superintendent. They fear the consequences of opposition although they often cannot specify what it might be, other than the obvious public degradation or the superintendent's long memory. Fourth, the administration has the better information about the budget, its flexibility, what will occur in the legislature, etc. It also knows what it can get the Board to accept. The lack of "hard" information also gets used as a form of power because it can delay making commitments.

4) The nature of the respective stakes in the negotiation.

Both parties obviously have a common goal of reaching an agreement, reaching one without discord, and without public knowledge of discord. The administrations all recognize that teacher salaries are low and need improving. They also know that a good salary increase will maintain or improve the morale of the staff. They are also aware that a number of experienced teachers are leaving education because they cannot survive on a teacher's salary. Teachers clearly concur on these. The issues will be how much of an increase and how will it be distributed.

The individuals also have stakes in the negotiations, particularly the superintendents and the respective chairs of the committee. Inability to reach an agreement would be considered a failure. In addition, the superintendent must appear to be in control and keep the "demands reasonable" and the committee chairs must appear to be sufficiently forceful and to have reasoned logical arguments. Failure to do this means a loss of status. While such a loss is severe for the superintendent, it is also serious for the teachers because this is the one and only time that they collectively test themselves against the administration. Teachers who have an interest in positions in the teachers local and state group will have a stake in performing effectively.

They also have different and opposing stakes, interests, or goals. Both administrations believe that the base salary is the most important figure and to remain competitive for attracting beginning teachers it should be as high as possible. While the Meadmont administration recognizes the need to help career teachers, they want to do that by eliminating steps. The teachers on the committees, on the other hand, want the salary schedule increasingly differentiated to give greater rewards to the more experienced, more educated teachers.

An interesting off-setting stake in Meadmont is that the superintendent and the other administrators have a stake, from their perspective, in heading off the growth of the rival teachers' group. Thus they need to give a large increase, more if possible than the teachers ask, in order to decrease general dissatisfaction and show poor bargaining by the teachers at the same time. There is a bind because the teachers' negotiators are members of the rival group so that a large increase may appear due to the negotiators' skill and assertiveness. One attempt to control this possible impression was for the president of the recognized group to be present at all meetings of the salary committee and those meetings with the administration.

5) Visibility of the transactions.

Generally, the fact that process was occurring was known. However, the actual meetings and exchanges were closed. At times, the researcher was asked what the other side was doing because he knew what each was developing. He stated his inability to answer and remained noncommittal. In addition, what happened in joint meetings was known only to the participants. People outside, the Board and the rest of the teachers, depended upon accounts of those meetings. Teachers also, in general, did not know what their committee had proposed other than a sketchy account or a posted notice. In addition, in Meadmont, they did not know that the Board had already approved a proposed schedule.

6) The number and complexity of the issues.

The issues themselves were few and relatively simple. How much money would be added to salaries? And where would it be placed? Whatever complexity there was occurred in terms of adding new columns, increasing differences between columns, eliminating steps, or increasing percentage differences between steps.

7) Legitimacy of the issues.

There was no disagreement among any of the participants that they should be doing what they were doing or about the acceptability of discussing any of the topics.

8) Options to avoid or discontinue the negotiations.

Given the previous history and patterns of relationships, the administrations were under an obligation to engage in the process.

They, both, however indicated that they had the power to simply make a proposal to the Board that would be accepted and the teachers would have no recourse. They appeared willing to do this if necessary. The teachers, more so in Cooley Corners than Meadmont, were quite conscious of this possibility and thus were restrained in their suggestions. This, of course, is also a form of power in the negotiation process.

While Strauss locates the actor's theories of negotiation as part of the structural context, we are going to include it here because it appears to derive from both the structural and negotiation contexts. It is also tied to the negotiative strategies that the participants use and may not be clearly separable, at least in practice. Almost all of the participants regard the process as a ritual. They believe the outcome will not be altered greatly from the administration's initial intent. The administration feels relatively powerful and in control while the teachers feel powerless. They believe that they have to master the best verbal arguments and amass the most information while they recognize the administration has the information and also does not depend upon verbal presentations for its power. All of the participants have constrained themselves and the range of possible outcomes by dismissing the possibility of the levy increase. That may be a realistic assessment of the political situation but it also clearly affects the way the negotiations are viewed and develop. In addition, the admministration's ability to define the process as between them and the teachers and then to present it to the Board prevents the teachers from using the Board. Their adoption of this process limits their options. The administration is able to use the public and the media as dangerous parties and the Board as if it were independent and powerful when, in fact, it is more dependent and responsive. It is also a little bit like the car salesman's ploy of teaming up with the customer to put one over on the sales manager.

The stipulation by Long to the rest of the committee members that they should keep quiet was a result of his view that their silence would be attributed to unanimity and that his position would be stronger. It would also give him greater control over the situation and his members. Although it did break down, it was part of his theory of negotiation.

There are some differences in theories of negotiation between the two districts. The superintendent in Cooley Corners, Herman Jameson, is a domineering person whose words explode from his mouth. He never appears relaxed, always on edge, ready to act impulsively. Teachers and principals back away from him. His attitude is one of limited flexibility in terms of negotiations. He likes his teachers weak and takes advantage of that. Rob Simpson, in Meadmont, recognizes more than Jameson that negotiation is part of the tricks of the trade. He speaks in a more controlled, responsive, deliberate manner. People believe that he is relatively easy to talk with but that is actually deceptive. Nevertheless both their styles and theories affect the actual negotiations.

Differences between the teachers' groups show the Cooley Corners chair and group to be more passive and less optimistic than in Meadmont. Long, to some extent, wanted to get the process over with.

His presentations were quite factual and without emotional appeal, either in tone or in verbal symbols. He did not appear to offer much opposition and that was his view. While committee members in their meetings sought to develop and reinforce their own moral and emotional justification, they were generally silent in meetings with the administration and did not seem to spur Long at all. On the other hand, the Meadmont group had co-chairs who were familiar with negotiations, were primed with ideological justifications, and were more aggressive in their dealings with the administration. Their meetings, in contrast, with those in Cooley Corners, were characterized by more overt hostility to "they" and a stronger sense of "we-ness" and what should be, must be, and could be accomplished. This is not to suggest that they thought they could win but rather that it would be more like a real negotiation than in Cooley Corners.

In conclusion, what can be said about the process and outcome in the negotiations and what differences are there? The general conclusion is that the process in both districts went as the administration wanted and with the overall general effect that the superintendent wanted. In both instances, the average salary increase recommended by the administration and accepted by the Board was significantly larger than what the teachers' negotiating committee had suggested. Changes in the form of the salary schedule were more to the liking of the superintendent and assistant superintendent than they were to the majority of teachers in the district. Nothing was done to shake the power of the administration nor make the teachers feel they had gained more power.

Meadmont is clearly a different circumstance. A defeat was snatched from the jaws of victory. The administration had made a proposal that looked much better than the teachers committee, with its rival teachers' group co-chairs, had requested. The administration already had the Board's approval and both were pleased at what they could do for the teachers, cognizant of the errors made by the teachers' negotiators, and gleeful that the rival teachers' group had been made to look bad (or they thought they would be). But in attempting to compromise with the past system, Rob Simpson allowed a structural inequity to appear which deflected attention from the overall proposal. The presence of the President of the Board at that meeting fueled the opposition to the agreement. The President was aware of the resentment and then put continuing pressure upon the superintendent to relent and revise. Ultimately realizing that reason was on the side of compromise but recognizing that he would "lose face" (his words), he went ahead and ordered a revision. The Board has approved it. Despite comments about how proud they are to be part of the Meadmont system, the overarching reaction was that they had won a victory. Other administrators now have some questions about their leadership. Some members of the Board believe the problem could have been avoided and it adds to some of their concerns about the superintendent. That is off-set by the fact that they renewed his contract for a multi-year period. The rival teachers' group is emboldened and there will clearly be more conflict between the two groups. This discussion of the salary schedule negotiations is to some extent typical of the differences between the two systems and we will now turn to a discussion of them.

Differences in Negotiations between Meadmont and Cooley Corners

The Meadmont district appears more like a negotiated order than Cooley Corners. We are not asserting that it is one, only that it is closer to our image of that concept than the other district. While we are saying that negotiations appear to occur more often in Meadmont, we want to be perfectly clear that we are not saying it is an equitable system. Those with power and resources tend to operate more or less as they desire and if they participate in negotiations, they tend to dominate the process and the outcomes.

One interesting difference between the communities exists in terms of the numbers and organized activity of religious groups. There are several different religious schools in Cooley Corners and to our knowledge they were never the subject of problems or mention in conversations with school district members. Meadmont, however, has a large and active religious community with a number of separate schools. Because of their commitment to these, that community has opposed the passage of school bond issues and tax levy increases. Negotiations have occurred with them in the past to overcome their opposition, e.g. allowing their high school the use of public high school facilities. During the recent bond campaigns, members (and former officials) of this religious organization led the opposition. Negotiations were held with them about a public debate. In the same period, several meetings were held with a high religious official to seek the church's endorsement of the bond vote. Also discussions have occurred and are likely to continue about the transportation of private school students on public school buses.

Objectively the communities are different. One consequence of Meadmont's larger professional, business, and white-collar community is that more members of the community have contact with the schools, belong to school-related organizations and in various ways have tried to influence the schools or be mobilized by them. This parallels the successes of the Meadmont system which has extremely active and successful extra-curricular programs. A number of those programs also have active and involved adult support groups who lobby with the administration. Also the community has more voluntary associations and they are more likely to make requests of the school district--for attention to special groups, for changes in the curriculum, for help with their activities.

There is a sense in which the districts as a whole make difference in the frequency of negotiations. Meadmont views itself as a successful district while Cooley Corners has a low self-esteem and low morale. As a result, participants are more likely to think highly of themselves and of their contribution and to make requests or suggestions which lead to negotiations. Participants in Cooley Corners are likely to complain or keep quiet and retreat into themselves or depart.

This can be found when the Boards of Education are compared. Members of the Meadmont Board, in general, take a more active interest in the school system. They are better informed about broad educational

matters as well as about the affairs of the local school district. They go much more frequently to regional, state, and national meetings. They believe they are more in control in Meadmont than do those in Cooley Corners. And if they feel they are losing control, then they are more willing to push the issue than their Cooley Corner counterparts. They are more willing to search out issues, respond to community concerns, and to act independently of the administration. A crucial difference is that the Board in Cooley Corners meets only once a month while in Meadmont they meet at least two if not more times a month so they have more time to discuss and negotiate. Some members on the Meadmont Board spend a good deal of time talking outside the meetings and they are willing to do the political work necessary to create a coalition. They are less likely to call the administration and get a problem resolved on the phone. Cooley Corners Board members are much more likely to call or come into the office on an individual basis.

The differences between the coalitions on the Boards are interesting. In Cooley Corners, it has consisted of one man and two women. In Meadmont it is three men. The men have been harder to dissuade so the administration has had to compromise or comply. In Cooley Corners the administration knows the women will not follow through, and will not become assertive in their opposition so it refuses to bend and simply argues back or deflects the issue--and wins. Until the women demonstrate that they will not defer or acquiesce, they will not affect what happens in the system.

The Meadmont school district is a growing district while Cooley Corners is experiencing decline. People in Cooley Corners perceive greater constraint on their resources and make fewer requests than in Meadmont. The growth in the financial base and the numbers of students gives Meadmont some surplus of resources that can be allocated in new ways and thus make requests.

Meadmont is also a larger and more complexly organized district than Cooley Corners. There are more levels of administration, buildings, teachers, ancillary staff, and students. They are also aggregated in larger units than in Cooley Corners. This provides for more opportunities for contacts and possible problems and also elongates the distance between top and bottom. In general, there is a greater willingness to bring concerns to superordinates than in Cooley Corners. One reason is they believe that it is less likely to come to the attention of the superintendent and his assistants than in Cooley Corners. The complexity, in part, also gives rise to more committees and meetings on more subjects in Meadmont than in Cooley Corners. These all seem to be reasons for greater negotiative activity in Meadmont.

Probably the most important reason for the difference is the change in superintendents that occurred in Meadmont just prior to our study. Rob Simpson's predecessor ruled, we are told, with an iron hand. He intimidated his assistants, his Boards, and his staff. Many problems in the district were glossed over by him and his own approach created numerous problems. When Simpson was being recruited,

he was informed that "communication" was the major priority. He accepted that and made it his highest goal. He appears to be receptive to people and to want to pass information around. Some have taken him seriously and begun communicating. But in addition, structurally Simpson has become the recipient of problems that were not of his making. He has inherited a series of serious concerns which inevitably involve negotiations.

His style of administration is also quite different from the man he succeeded. He delegates far more responsibility to others and assumes that they will work it out without his knowledge or involvement. If issues come to his attention, he tells others to reach an agreement between them or he will have to impose one. He is, in addition, a cautious conservative man who does not like confrontation. He prefers taking his time, discussing at length with all those involved, and compromising to reach an agreement. His caution, however, can cause him problems as it did in the salary situation. He appears to be more responsive and weaker than he actually is. Nevertheless, the delegation of authority, the cautious approach, the willingness to talk and compromise all facilitate and encourage negotiation. Simpson, in addition, has a change agenda of his own which he has not imposed upon the district but he had released some of that to some of his associates. As they attempt to plan and implement these changes, they structure negotiative possibilities.

Herman Jameson in Cooley Corners is quite different. He acts in ways which minimize negotiation. In the first place, Jameson succeeded a man who had shaken up the system. Jameson's appointment to the superintendency was clouded because several Board members charged that the selection process was rigged. Jameson's general approach then was to quiet and calm things down. Little change was planned or effected. Everyone sought a retreat to normality. However as time passed Jameson became more controlling and vocal. He dominated Board meetings. He challenged those who opposed him. He did not delegate authority to his assistant superintendents. He would frequently go into their office when they were meeting with others to find out what was happening. He chaired and ran all the principals' meetings. He answered questions addressed to others at all kinds of gatherings. Jameson constantly used rhetoric, name dropping, and information spewing to head off issues. His general style can be seen in the language arts contracts situation.

The assistant superintendents, two in each district, tend to dampen negotiation. The two in Meadmont, Bernard Johnston and Cyril Overton, are long-time incumbents of their positions and proteges of the previous superintendent. While they have greater authority and responsibility under Simpson than his predecessor, they define their position as complying with his directives and keeping his life as uncomplicated as possible. They tend to be extremely bureaucratic, orderly, and conservative. Cyril Overton, who handles finance and administration is regarded as somewhat more approachable and more of a "good old boy." Johnston, who handles personnel and curriculum, is avoided whenever possible by subordinates throughout the system. His attachment to tradition is so strong that the arduous process of trying to move him from his bureaucratic position is not often undertaken.

In Cooley Corners, Tommy Wilson has accumulated over twenty years in the district. He is narrow and conservative in his approach to education. His responsibility now is buildings and grounds but at one time included transportation and purchasing. He is perceived as incompetent by half the Board, his assistant superintendent colleague, and many on the staff. Most people avoid him because he does not affect their area or they know he is powerless or unsympathetic. His own inadequacy was the source of a major negotiation involving the School Board itself and between the Board and the administration (Hall and Spencer-Hall, 1979). He has been unable to control the activities of the maintenance supervisor who is his subordinate. It has never been clear why Jameson supported him. That remains to be resolved in a future interview with Jameson. Jameson tends to dominate even the area left by him in Wilson's domain but he also has not seen fit to supervise the maintenance supervisor.

Russell Shaw, on the other hand, is young and a close friend of Jameson's from college. He has appeared to be open and receptive to people in his area of curriculum and personnel. He also had ideas and changes that he wanted to implement. Those ideas seem progressive in relation to others in the district. He has not done so yet because Jameson has kept him overshadowed and controlled. Shaw will become superintendent this summer so we may observe his program and style. Shaw's own organizational approach is more power-dominated than it appears. He seems to like to structure situations which appear to be democratic, negotiating, and decision-making, but he effectively controls them as he did in the development of a gifted program and the selection of textbooks (Hall and Spencer-Hall, 1979). In other words, he uses symbolic forms to give the appearance of allowing people to participate, defend their position and have power but he either artfully or forcefully if necessary asserts what he wants to happen. Over time this could lead to confrontation or simply a repetition of what exists under Jameson.

At the director level, Cooley Corners only has two individuals, one who has been "kicked upstairs" because he was unable to handle a previous assignment and an organizationally upwardly mobile young man. The former is very much under the control of the superintendent and does primarily "gopher" jobs. The latter, partly because of his age and appearance--quite youthful and his responsibility--special education--is involved in numerous negotiations. The ambiguity of that area, the need for staffings, the development of I.E.P.'s, the contact with government agencies and parents opens up the range of contact and necessary agreements.

A brief discussion of special education in the two districts is useful here. Cooley Corners has tended to resist mainstreaming for a number of reasons too complicated to mention here. They have maintained a special education center instead. The net result is while there are numerous negotiations, there are less than in Meadmont where special education services are offered in most of the schools and the children are already mainstreamed. That situation means that

the special education director has to coordinte with numerous principals and teachers as well as parents and agencies. In addition, within each school building, there is a great deal of problem-solving in relation to special education children, their teachers, and the other teachers in the building. If one chose the one instructional area where there were the most negotiations, it would be special education.

Meadmont has directors of health services, elementary education, transportation, community relations, and buildings and grounds as well as a number of coordinators, e.g. library, art, speech therapy. All have some degree of autonomy and the complexity of their relationships, particularly because of their contact with building principals and staff, leads to a number of negotiations. Frequent negotiation occurs between the elementary education and special education directors and a building principal about the need for additional space, personnel, materials, funds or in regard to a parent's complaint.

Transportation in Meadmont is a larger and more complex situation than in Cooley Corners. The director in Meadmont has to deal with a much larger area, more children, parents, buildings, drivers, principals, etc. The director is perceived by most principals and some Board members to be inadequate for the position. One consequence of this is that he frequently finds himself involved in negotiations which he cannot control or in which he is not successful.

The director of health services is a nurse who is also responsible for several buildings as well. In general health services is understaffed so that negotiations go on within the system in terms of the distribution of those resources. The director, also, takes a very active interest in students and staff beyond the minimal physical health concerns. As a result, she is more involved in working out problems with principals and teachers than would be normal for someone in her position. She is also attempting to get the district to expand her area in terms of health education and personnel so that she is attempting negotiations directly with the superintendent. A major conflict between her and a building principal who claimed his building was not getting its share of her time led to her resignation. The superintendent instructed the building principal and the health services director to work it out or he would. They negotiated an agreement that appears to have worked.

Community relations has been the source of some negotiations primarily because Board members and eventually the superintendent believed that the director did not have the skills necessary for election campaigns or a public relations program. The superintendent had been reluctant to remove such a veteran and had difficulty firing him. So he eventually negotiated, through discussions with the Board and one of the secondary buildings, the return of that person to an administrative position.

The reader may note that no mention has been made of a director of secondary education. There is one but he is also principal of the high school. This dual role results in a structural conflict which pits one of the junior high principals against the senior high

principal-director because of restrictions upon his autonomy. Members of his staff are required to get high school department head authorization when they expend funds, take trips, etc. The building principal argues against and says his staff supports him. The evidence is ambiguous because some of his staff want some freedom from him and this system provides it. The junior high principal has on numerous occasions drawn the assistant superintendents into the situation to achieve limited change. His attempt to get the superintendent to resolve the contradiction has failed. The superintendent has tried to get the high school principal to give up that position and become a full-time director of secondary education. He has refused the "promotion." The situation consequently promotes a number of negotiations.

Another source of negotiation which differentiates the two districts is departmentalized elementary instruction. The plan was drawn up by the previous superintendent and implemented by the assistant superintendents and about half of the current elementary principals. The current director of elementary education was also one of the elementary principals when the plan was implemented about a decade ago. Toward the end of the old superintendent's reign and the beginning of Simpson's tenure and in conjunction with an outside evaluation, some teachers began to express opposition to this program for first and second graders. The outside evaluators recommended some thought be given to changing those grades to self-contained settings. Since that time several Board members have pushed for self-containment. A small group of parents, including several former elementary teachers have put pressure on the district to change. New principals not committed to the old superintendent or the instructional program have worked out new arrangements that are being "tested." The superintendent and director of elementary education are moving slowly and cautiously to alter the system but in a way intended not to upset old-timers. Privately, they both express reservations about the instructional plan but publicly they defend it. This mode of instruction and the pressures for change have no parallel representation in Cooley Corners nor is there any significant concern at any level with curriculum and instruction in Cooley Corners.

A comparison of the principals in the two districts shows sharp significant differences. At the elementary level, Meadmont has hired five new principals in the past few years. All of them are fairly young. Most of them are pursuing doctorates in education and have designs for career mobility. All of their wives also work for the local system. Collectively, they have been pushing for greater building autonomy, rather than central office control. The elementary principals have an organization which meets without other administrators present and relays formal requests for salary and working conditions to the administration. They also meet once a month with the director of elementary education in a formal session. After that meeting they convene in the parking lot for an informal session. One principal told Peter Hall that this was where all the important decisions were made. Most of the newer principals and their wives are part of a social network that includes the director of elementary education and his wife. They view him as a friend, as approachable, and a defender of their interests. He is quite supportive of them as well. Their push for autonomy, their organization, the orientation to instructional change, and the good relations with the director led to numerous contacts and arrangements.

The elementary principals in Cooley Corners are older, less educated, less assertive, and unorganized as a collectivity. They never meet as a group without the superintendent. They never make collective requests. The Board and the administration believe most of them to be, at best, adequate. They are not seen to be providing educational leadership in their buildings. Because of the way they define their roles and because of declining enrollments, they are less likely to make requests to the central administration. They stifle the potential initiative of their teachers by telling them the central administration will say "no." The result is low frequency of negotiation.

The high school principals also demonstrate some important differences. Al Lindsay at Cooley Corners takes pride in "running a tight ship." He is conservative and traditional about education, a strict disciplinarian, and very bureaucratic in his administrative style. He is perceived by his teachers and school board members as unapproachable and inflexible. At the same time, he busies himself in ways that keep him uninformed about what is happening in the school or in the classroom. Ernest Palmer, on the other hand, in Meadmont, views one of his primary roles as a mediator and negotiator (the central administration also sees him this way). He prides himself as a developer of extra-curricular activities. He leaves routine and curriculum to one of his assistants. Whether by choice or by imposition from above in the past, he has allowed a number of faculty to become "prima donnas" in extra-curricular areas. He recognizes the tensions this causes but regards that as a necessary consequence of an excellent high school. While other teachers note that Palmer is the power in the school and are resentful of the extra-curricular emphasis, they are aware that Palmer is "flexible" and agreements can be individually negotiated at times and if necessary. Lindsay has no tolerance for prima donnas and does not encourage those who have such designs or teachers, in general, who want to make arrangements.

Lindsay's rigidity has led to the emergence of controversies which have resulted in his defeats in the negotiations because the Board and/or the administration side with those seeking change and autonomy.

The intermediate level is more complicated. One junior high principal in Meadmont is viewed by his staff to be ineffective. The administration and the Board concur in this judgment. They were hoping for a bond issue to solve the problem by providing a big new junior high building with a new principal. As long as he is the principal, his staff has decided to use one of two tacks. Generally they work out numerous arrangements among themselves which preclude the necessity of consulting him. The other is to choose a teacher who he is known to respect and have that person negotiate with him. We have mentioned the other junior high principal in terms of the conflict with the high school principal. He is supportive of <u>his</u> staff and <u>his</u> building and dominates it. He does not hesitate to make requests or demands. The result of his lobbying is that his building has greater resources than the other junior high.

The middle school principal in Cooley Corners is known for his rigid adherence to rules and procedures by administrators, Board members and teachers. His staff perceive him to be cold and uninterested in classroom problems. He therefore discourages negotiations within the school and if problems occur will issue an edict. He does not make requests or demands upon the administration. He regards himself as an administration man and his job is to keep the school running smoothly. The net effect is that, for varying reasons, Meadmont's intermediate schools are the context for more negotiations.

A comparison of teachers in the two districts also results in greater negotiations in Meadmont. One obvious difference is in the level of teacher militancy. It would be almost impossible to envision a meeting in Cooley Corners like the one in Meadmont mentioned in the salary negotiations discussion. A very active vocal nucleus of teachers, primarily at the high school, has tripled its membership in a year and is viewed as a serious threat by the recognized organization, the central administration, and most of the Board. Members of that group are interested in matters other than salary as well and have begun attempts to resolve old problems, institute new changes, and recruit new members on the basis of handling their specific problems or general concerns. Their recent successes, claimed or not, heighten their sense of efficacy and the likelihood of more negotiating activity. Teachers in Cooley Corners have basically adapted to the system. Most ignore their own organization. Most have a generally negative attitude about desiring or implementing change or becoming more assertive with any level of administration. Many of them expect failure in the classroom, in the system, and in the community. For many teachers in Cooley Corners, given their perceptions of their students and the structure of the district, there is simply a desire to get through the day, the week, and the year. While clearly a good deal of that exists in Meadmont, there is more of a sense of pride in the district, confidence in their own abilities, and of a collective and individual assertiveness.

While this section has focused upon individuals and their styles, perceptions, and other subjective phenomena, we do not discount structural considerations. The subjective aspects have indeed interacted with the structural forms over a long period of time. They do help provide a dynamic in the organizational life. According to what we have been told in comparison with the previous time period in Meadmont, there are people at all levels of the district who view negotiation as a possible or reasonable approach to solving problems and handling issues. There are, in addition, people at all levels who view changes as being necessary including giving autonomy to more participants. The fact that some of those at higher levels are less willing than in the past to impose rulings parallels the growing sense of militancy among the teachers and control among the principals. While the administration is adamantly opposed to the rival teachers' group, its cautious moderate adaptive style may encourage the very thing it fears. It should be pointed out that Board members are also increasingly involving themselves in these processes.

In Cooley Corners, the participants at all levels tend not to be efficacious about negotiations nor believe them a possible or reasonable approach. The Board does not believe it can control the administration. The teachers do not believe they can effectively negotiate with principals or the administration. Principals and other administrators feel constrained by the superintendent. We are not suggesting that in fact the system runs smoothly or is coordinated but simply that negotiations are less frequent. There is in Cooley Corners a great deal of loose coupling, avoidance, and overlooking. There is a lot of ritualistic rhetoric with little follow-up.

Looking back over discussion of negotiations in schools, there are some brief general points that can be made about organizational location and frequency of negotiation. As a number of people have suggested, a good deal of negotiative activity takes place across organizational boundaries either with sections of the community or with corporate entities. More negotiation seems to occur at the top of organization, e.g. between the Board and the administration, than at the bottom. At the lower levels, negotiations were more likely to go on between peers rather than involve someone of higher status. If someone from a higher position was involved, it tended to be only one level above. Finally there were some individuals who had sufficient resources, support outside the system and on the Boards and self-confidence who were able to negotiate autonomy and the resources necessary to develop their own programs. But it required the support from others to make it a success. Analysis at a later time will explicate these generalizations.

Conclusion

This report presents some partial conclusions based upon two years of observations in two school districts. The data will be scrutinized and analyzed in more conceptual and detailed fashion over the next few years. This is a project which is still in process so this report constitutes more of a progress report than a final report. With qualitative data, this is the nature of the endeavor.

Nevertheless some general points can be made. It is possible to undertake a study of an entire school district. Receptivity, entry, rapport, involvement, access, and departure are relatively easy to manage. School systems have a significant interest in problem-solving and administrative coordination. Participants tend to be open to people sincerely interested in them and what they do and feel. The presence of a husband and wife research team had both advantages and disadvantages. Overall, the basic advantage was the ability to get different, and often contradictory, perspectives from participants. A clue to the system could also be obtained from the manner in which they responded to each of us.

The analysis of problems showed that they could be categorized and analyzed in terms of their dimensions and careers. Those dimensions, situational context, core issue, source, emergence, magnitude, duration, intensity, resolution, and negotiation provide the basis for studying the careers of problems for doing analytic comparisons.

Perhaps the strongest part of the analysis comes in locating problems within the structure and processes of the school system. The isolation of problems as single independent events occurring simultaneously or as overlapping linked events occurring simultaneously or sequentially allows us to be able to depict visually and symbolically what is a complex process. While people intuitively know that there are lots of problems and that they do not come along one at a time and get in line, they seem unaware of the frequency and magnitude of problems and how they affect performance. Participants frequently see problems as due to individuals or see them in simplistic ways. The fact that conversations about problems are often brief means that the complexities depicted on pp. 49, 51, and 52 are rarely seen as a totality. The inability to see the totality makes it easier to demand action. On the other hand, such action may be premised upon insufficient attention to broad dimensions to underlying assumptions, or to good evidence. For example, no one actually produced any evidence or the establishment of procedures to create evidence that would prove that first and second graders will fare better socioemotionally in self-contained classrooms in Meadmont.

While we did observe some negotiations within both of the systems, our general conclusion was that the key to understanding organizational form and process was not negotiation. The distribution of power, the weight of tradition, organizational segmentation and the disjunctions between word and deed, unit and level led to a tentative view that schools were loosely-coupled systems. There still remains

a knotty problem of how one can create a conception of organization when one is so close to day-to-day processes. Obviously multiple observers and movement to different levels should and did help. It is still easier to stand outside and say that is an organization than it is to state that after observing from the inside. The limits of the organization, its form, and its essence are not empirically or conceptually simple.

One system did appear to have more negotiation than the second. The explications of the differences between the two systems could lead to an understanding of the variations in conditions that give rise to negotiations. Some of those conditions were evident in the original model--rapid change, administrator succession, multi-professional staffing, and ideological diversity and conflict. In addition to those, we would add community context, organizational traditions, external influence, organizational complexity, and the distribution of power. Another critical factor is the administrative style of the superintendent. That style communicates directly and indirectly to those throughout the system and in the community what kinds of behaviors will be received favorably, tolerated, or not opposed successfully. We would incorporate the idea of administrative style into what Strauss calls actor's theories of negotiations. It was clear to us that Meadmont's staff saw negotiation as a more normally occurring process and were more efficacious about its consequences than those in Cooley Corners. If the superintendent delegates authority, is open to communication, readily compromises, and is cautious and moderate, those around and below him will more likely respond in ways that generate negotiations. His problems, of course, will come if he is not serious about those characteristics or if they are not balanced. But clearly, people do behave on the basis of what they perceive and believe. To cite an "old saw," things defined as real are real in their consequences.

We do reiterate, however, that the existence of negotiations does not mean everyone participates or everyone participates equally with equal outcomes. The distribution of power clearly affected the emergence and course of negotiations. We did observe more negotiation across the boundaries of the organization and at the top levels than we did at lower levels. Negotiation, in general, is more likely to take place among equals at all levels than between unequals. These other options are available.

Researchers always have the problem of how honest to be in revealing discrediting information or indicating limitations of their studies. Research reports tend to make more linear, logical, and neat processes that were, in fact, disorganized, partial, emergent, and unclear. To acknowledge what everyone knows and what ethnomethodologists have studied about doing research, lays one open to questions, challenges, refutations, and dismissal. On the other hand, the norms of doing science tell us that readers need to know what to take into account in order to interpret findings as well as to reproduce the research. We will attempt to follow through with that norm but the reader should accept the fact that our subconscious will not allow us to be starkly confessional. Perhaps someone will do a paper on data-gathering and analysis and reporting as loosely-coupled systems.

We have already indicated that the inability to be everywhere at once or at one place all the time constitutes a limitation on the gathering of observational and behavioral data. Unfortunately, the necessary investigative resources for studying even a medium-sized school district are not likely to be available. That will therefore require delimiting the areas of study and/or the depth of foci according to some prearranged plan. To do so, however, means that one may restrict spontaneity and creativity as well as to miss significant happenings. While we did utilize theoretical, substantive, and area sampling, we had a tendency to go where the action was. One consequence is that certain areas are not examined in great detail. In general, ancillary areas like maintenance, food services, central technical and secretarial, subject matter coordinators were not subject to more than superficial observation. Given the numbers of elementary schools, only a few could be sampled intensively. Future plans call for going back and trying to add to the elementary school observations to get wider variation. Not all persons at the same level or in the same unit were equally receptive and open. We clearly know more, for example, about some Board members or principals than others. Whether our inferences about them are correct is not just speculation but is somewhat uncertain. We also had a more difficult time penetrating screens in parts of Cooley Corners and that was the district that we got our feet wet in. So there is the lurking suspicion that those data are not as powerful or useful as those in Meadmont. That is not to say they are invalid. Rather our own skepticism means that in order to say something about Cooley Corners requires that we have more evidence than with reference to Meadmont. In retrospect, several areas in both systems would deserve more attention. Special education and guidance and counseling were areas that gave evidence of much negotiation. The parallel to psychiatry and medicine are obvious so that is a logical occurrence. However, while we have some good observations in these areas they are not so extensive or intensive as we now feel are deserved. Another retrospective reaction is that greater attention be paid to the interorganizational linkages to state educational bureaucracy and the ties to the federal government.

An obvious question about a case study is the degree of its representativeness and consequent generalizability of the results. Both districts were small to medium sized in small to middle-sized communities in a relatively conservative traditional midwestern context. While they may be typical of that context, they may tell us little about larger suburban, urban districts in different parts of the country with different kinds of populations and problems. In addition, we are aware of differences our districts have with smaller rural districts. We would, of course, advocate studies of the kind we undertook in these other kinds of districts. In order to determine whether the problems we observed were typical of other districts, we have done two things. First, we sent a survey to superintendents and the president of the Board and one other member of a sample of districts in the state inquiring about the kinds of problems encountered in the past several years. The responses to those surveys are currently being processed. We are confident that our return rate is sufficiently high to give us a good basis for comparison. We have also begun a series of smaller briefer case studies in selected districts in the state. The intention is to spend three to five days in a community interviewing a number of people in the

school system about the nature of problems and problem-handling within the district. Several of those have already been completed and within the next year another five will probably be executed.

Finally, we want to relate briefly some of the future directions that flow from the work to date whether we undertake it or suggest it to others. Three possible monographs are envisioned. One is basically a descriptive account of the two communities, the districts--level by level, and the differences between them. The second focuses on the typological analysis of problems, problem occurrence, and problem processes. The third deals with the organizational form of school systems and evaluation of the various metaphors that might be used to understand the organization. Several smaller works are in process, one on the various bond campaigns in both communities and another on the transition from an open junior high school to a closed intermediate school.

An offspring of this research is a current project by Dee Hall. Her contacts with women teachers brought back her own memories of the fatigue and stress of teaching and then racing home to tend to meals and children. This led to a reconceptualization of women teachers as persons who have to mediate the effects of school and home in general in the domains of male dominance. She is currently studying a number of women teachers, having them write diaries, and interviewing them to see how they deal with their professional and nonprofessional lives and the relationships between them.

Sexism was quite prevalent in the districts that were studied. Male administrators complained about unprofessional women teachers who would not stay for late meetings or who were unconcerned with in-service training. The female administrator stands out in this world. A future study based upon observations, diaries, and interviews is contemplated to see how women administrators handle their male counterparts as well as their superordinates and subordinates. One thing is clear and that is they will need a good sense of humor.

The reader may wonder where the students were during this study. They appear only as statistics, products, spectators, if at all. Future work should determine what the role of the student is in the organization, what the linkage is to the various levels, and whether students do or can have an impact upon the organization at any level--classroom, school, elementary, secondary, etc.

At the other extreme, there were some interesting observations which inspire some continued attention. The preoccupation with the media and public relations that occurred in both districts was unexpected. It may be a sign of the times but the interaction between the district and the radio and newspaper staffs were filled with drama, intrigue, and emotion. In addition, the obsession with a good image and countering bad publicity made impression management a key concept in understanding administrator activities.

At the community level, the importance of banks, service organizations, and country clubs was not unexpected but assumed greater importance than anticipated. A useful study would involve studying

those linkages. Banks and bankers, for example, lent personnel to bond campaign committees and heavily funded those campaigns. Service organizations become a place where administrators exchanged ideas, fraternity, and support with its business boosters. It was also a place where both Board members and administrators came together. Also the country clubs played an important role in providing inputs to Board members and preparing them for socialization with each other. In Cooley Corners, Board members and administrators as well as a number of teachers share membership. In Meadmont, such memberships appear reserved for Board members.

The politics of the state associations and the politics of the State Department of Education and their relationships to state government also loomed up in the study. If one had a better sense of those ties, then explanations for legislative enactment, state appropriations and bureaucratic rulings as they affect local districts would be forthcoming. A side note is that the local districts fear the new Department of Education because of presumed NEA influence as well as the spectre of one more bureaucracy. An obviously needed study would be the relationship of the new department to states and to local districts.

Finally and because it may have the greatest consequence for the districts we observed, we want to follow the career of the rival teachers' organization in Meadmont. If they are successful in becoming the majority, then the Board of Education will recognize them as the official teacher organization. That will dramatically alter the relationships between all participants--or at least that is what all believe. Meadmont would then become a district like many others. Knowing how and why that happened could be very informative.

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